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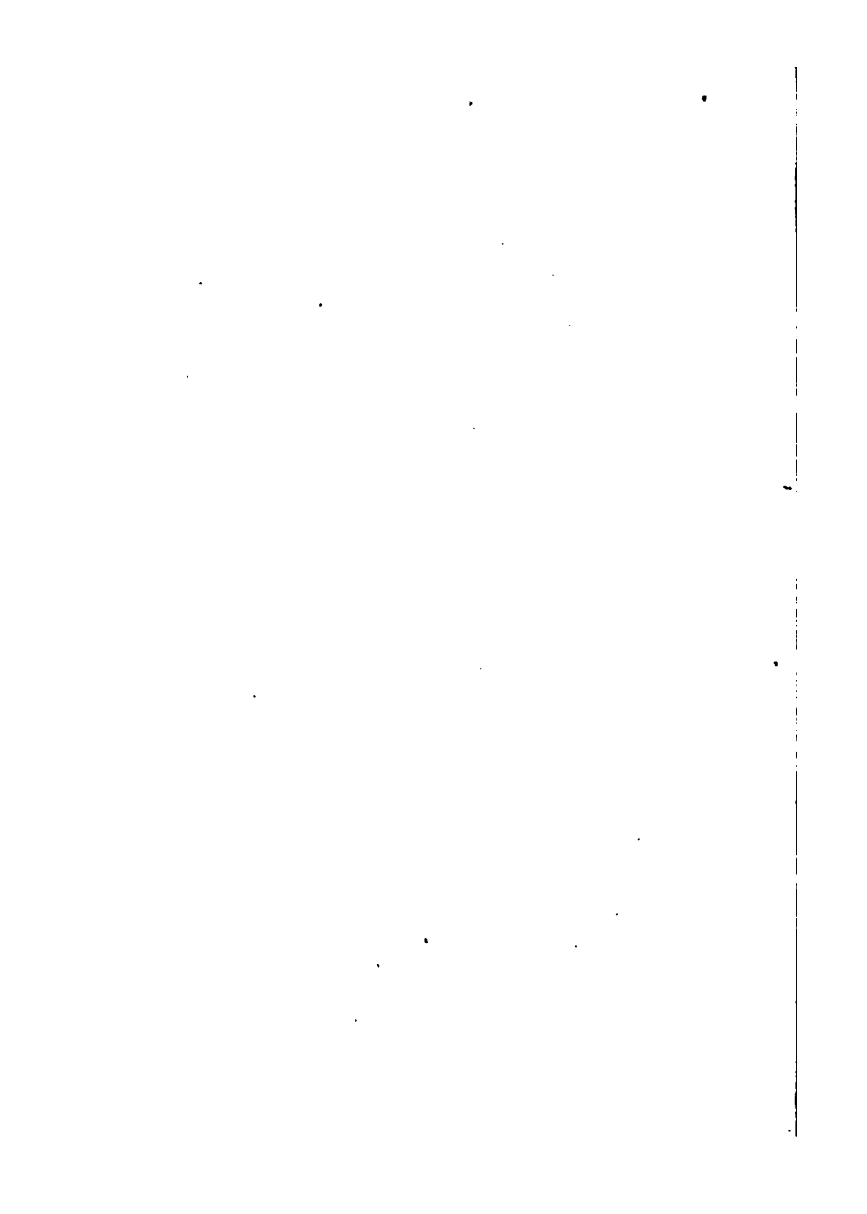


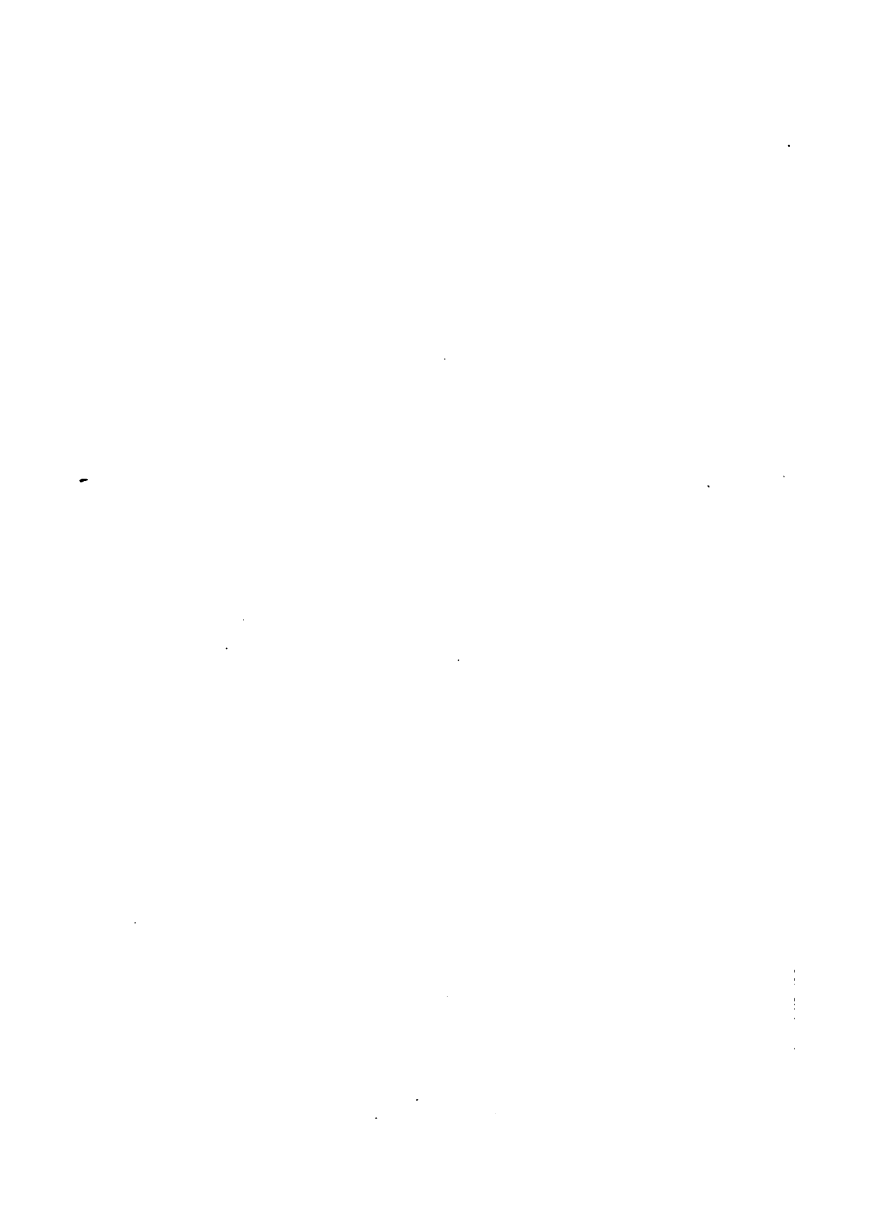


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**" Bidding him keep away, and get help from elsewhere, if he would
save his life and their own."**

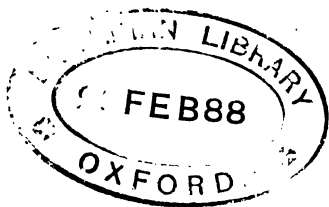
LUPICINE;
OR,
THE HERMIT OF ST. LOUP.

A STORY OF THE FIFTH CENTURY,
Founded on the FRENCH of M. CHARLES CHATELANAT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"CHANGES UPON CHURCH BELLS," &c.

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PREFACE.

THE writer's best thanks are due to his unknown friend, M. Chatelanat, whose "Souvenirs de Jeunesse" contains the Original Sketches, from which the following simple pictures are drawn. Should these pages ever meet the eye of M. Chatelanat, it is hoped that he will excuse the liberty that has been taken in filling up his outlines, and adding fresh scenes to his little tableau.

The writer hopes that some interest may be awakened, among the readers of "Lupicine," in the valuable Institution, which has

arisen on the supposed site of the Hermit's retreat, or at least very near it, and bears the French rendering of his name,—St. Loup.

The late Miss Agnes Jones, to whose life reference is made in a note at the opening of the story, thus writes of the Deaconess' Institution of St Loup :—

“ It lies in the country between Lausanne and Yverdun. A very rough road leads from the Edessiers Railway Station, and a most primitive post-chaise brings you to the neighbouring village of La Sarraz. . . . It has its Free and Established Churches, and the schools in connection with both are attended by the children from the knots of houses, which scarce deserve the name of villages, and lie scattered over the surrounding country. These mostly have their churches, though the pastor of each can hardly have a hundred souls under his care. Leaving

La Sarraz, a very lovely road leads the visitor in about half-an-hour to the first of these village spires. . . . You pass on up a slight ascent, by a river and among trees, to a very curious rock, encircled spot, where, above the village and commanding the whole extent of the country, stand three or four detached buildings, [one the dwelling-house of the Pastor]. . . . The house stands on an eminence; in fact, the ground is curiously cut away in front, so that house and garden seem to be on a high terrace; below is a little village, and a noisy stream winds among shrubs and trees to the left; a vast expanse of rather flat ground stretches before you, rich fields, a few trees, and scattered knots of houses, and then, far away, but beautifully distinct in clear weather, Mont Blanc, in his greatest magnificence, and all the snowy Alpine range. I never saw Mont Blanc as I have seen him from this neighbourhood.

He indeed stands forth the 'monarch' from amid his attendant 'guards'

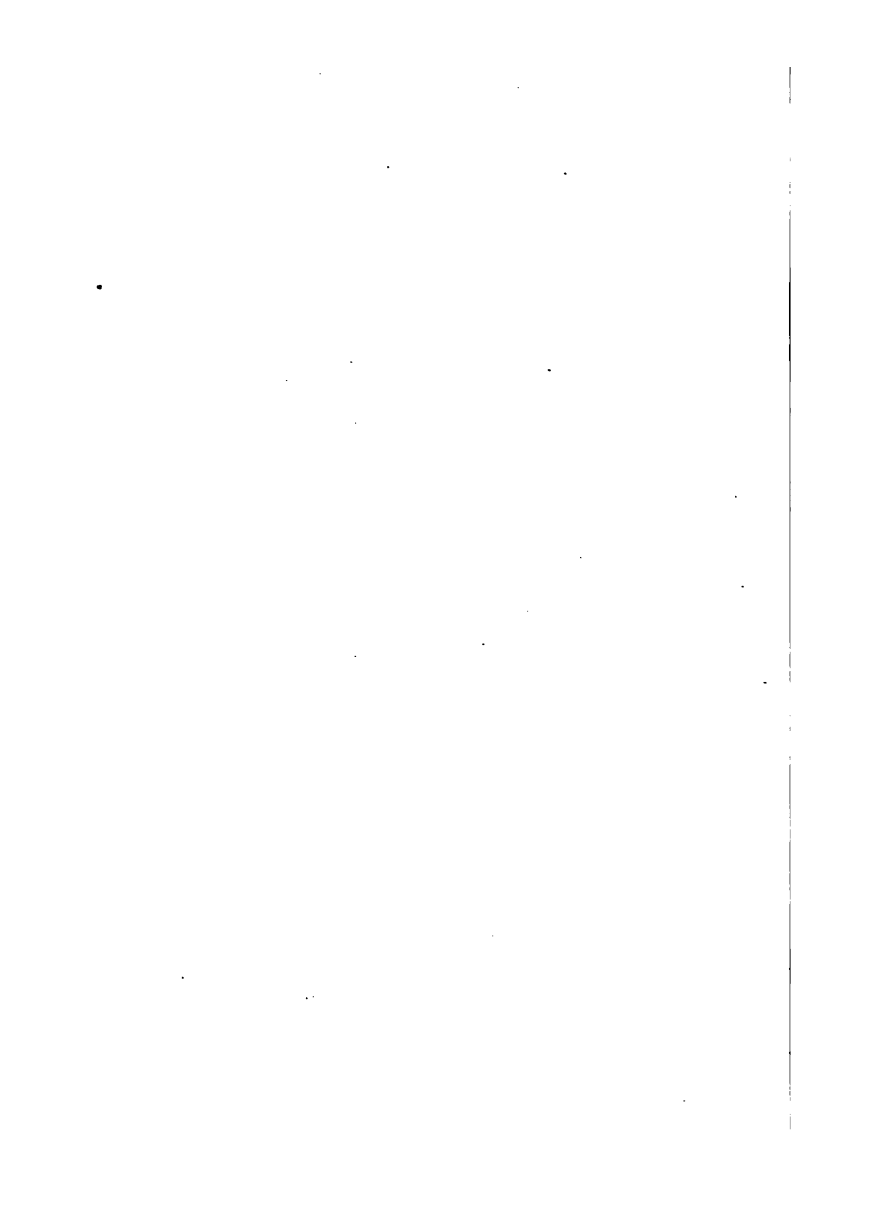
"Behind the house, enclosing its apparent domain, or rather fields, is a very curious semi-circular wall of rock, about 50 feet high, from which there is no apparent egress. From the summit the Alpine panorama is complete. In the part nearest the house is the apparently excavated cavity where the 'Patron Saint' of the district, led his hermit life. . . .

"Much good has been done by this unpretending Institution, and much more we trust may arise. God's blessing upon it is so earnestly and constantly sought, that doubtless He will not withhold, but shower down rich grace on its sisters."

For the historical characters reference has chiefly been made to Mosheim, Gibbon, Russell's Modern Europe and Prince's Parallel History.

It has been thought that this little narrative might be suitable for boys' Sunday reading. But by whomsoever read, and at whatever time, may the Spirit of Light bless it to the multiplying of true waiters upon and workers for our Lord and Master, who Himself showed us most successfully how to combine the spirit of retirement and prayer with the energy of active service for God.

C. S. H.



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LUPICINE;

OR,

THE HERMIT OF ST. LOUP.

CHAPTER I.

THE HERMIT AND HIS HAUNTS.

"That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the holly tree."

SOUTHEY.

THE traveller from Orbe, who skirts the foot of the Jura, and makes for the pretty little town of la Sarraz, is agreeably surprised on discovering, amid the foliage, the towers of its ancient château. He halts for a moment to enjoy the lovely scene, and to admire the romantic views by which he is surrounded.

On his right hand he espies, high up on

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the top of a hill, covered with wild rocks and green slopes, the pile of white buildings known as the Institution of Saint Loup. There, within the last few years, Christian charity has founded a Home, and an Establishment of Deaconesses, who have spread their gentle wings in services of faith and love far and wide around. Thither, he knows, a multitude of sufferers have found their way to seek health of body and peace of soul, and he feels his heart cheered as well as soothed by the atmosphere that breathes above the spot.*

At his feet he perceives the pretty steeple of the village of Pompaples, gleaming in the sun as it rises among the dark walnut trees. Farther on lie the thick woods, near which he will presently stop to shake from his feet the dust they have gathered in his long and

* See a short but interesting description of the (Protestant) Deaconess Institution of St. Loup in the Appendix to the *Memorials of Agnes Elizabeth Jones* (Strahan & Co., Ludgate Hill, E.C.). The village is there called La Sarray.

tiring walk. Above this green dome of trees are seen the graceful towers of the Château of la Sarraz, bringing to the traveller's mind thoughts and visions of the exploits of its lords in the days of their feudal grandeur. The waving bands of ivy, that twine and droop around the walls, appear to his fancy like the fairy troops that haunt such ancient relics of the past.

The horizon is bounded on the west by the faint outline of the Jura, far away beyond the villages and oak forests, the undulating line fading gradually away towards the point, where, if the eye could follow it, it would melt into the peaceful surface of the blue Leman.

The traveller proceeds, and rests anon by the mill-pool of Bornuz, from whence the watershed sends down an equal contribution, in the form of two silver streams, toward the German Ocean on the north, and the Mediterranean on the south.*

* The former joins the Orbe, and flows through the Lakes of Neuchâtel and Bienné, under the name of the

At the present day the ear is met by the numberless sounds that tell of modern civilisation. The mill-wheel rumbles and splashes as its sparkling boards dip and rise out of the stream; the peasant whistles cheerily as he passes leisurely with his team, and if you wish him a friendly "good-morrow," he will be nothing loth to pull up for a few minutes, and indulge in a chat with the stranger; the maiden runs out from the little chalet hard by to fill her pitcher at the spring, and all around speaks of peace and gladness, while the golden seas of barley, waving in the summer breeze, smile and ripple and dimple to remind you it is a happy country.

Thirteen hundred years ago,—if you can take so long a leap back into the past,—it was a very different scene. The country was for the most part sunk in the darkness of heathenism. But a few scattered hamlets,

Aar, into the Rhine. The latter, known as the Venoge, enters the Lake of Geneva not far from Lausanne, and so mingles with the waters of the Rhone.



"The maiden runs out from the little chalet hard by to fill her pitcher at the spring."

and some stray single huts, standing lonely enough on the borders of the forests, might be seen here and there among the valleys, and instead of the merry songs of the reapers, the air too often resounded with the din of heathen feasts. Close down to the road came thick coppices, the out-lying portions of the wood which still clothes the sides of the Jura. One narrow path led toward the Roman road, which crossed the hills of Maurmont in the direction of Orbe. There were now and then open spaces or 'leys' cleared in the very heart of the forest, whither the young shepherd lads were wont to lead their flocks. All else was bare rock, or lofty timber, or thick underwood.

While large parts of the forest, however, have altogether disappeared, there are many spots which remain, as far as we can judge, in exactly the same state in which their early inhabitants left them. There is the same circle of rocks looking down in rude majesty upon the glade beneath; there are the same deep grottoes in the mountain side,



full of picturesque beauty to the artist, and equally suited for a game of hide-and-seek with the children, or to be the haunt of a robber and his gang.

But at the time of which I am speaking there lived in one of these mountain grottoes neither merry shepherd-boy nor savage bandit, but a simple-hearted, loveable old man, who went by the name of the Hermit. From his self-denying conduct, and upright God-fearing manner of life, he was honoured with the title of Saint Loup; but the real name he had borne, when he left his Italian home to preach among the idolaters of the Alps, was that of Lupicino or Lupicine, as we might perhaps call him now.

Lupicine, it is said, was of noble birth, and lived at Rome with his beloved brother Romain, about the middle of the fifth century. The great empire had been divided into those of the east and west. Corruption and disorder were creeping over the whole of Europe. The religion of the holy Jesus had gradually made its way through all

classes of society, till now it was, in name at any rate, the settled and professed faith of the more enlightened portion of mankind. But with influence and authority came also ambition and worldliness, and Lupicine sighed over the follies and sins of Christendom, and longed for the return of simpler faith, purer doctrine, and greater holiness of life.

Alaric * had already sacked Rome. Attila was threatening it. There were signs of a great breaking up of the empire. Hordes of barbarian nations were continually over-running the more civilised countries of the continent; and between the pursuit of pleasure, honour or gain on the one hand, and the fear of invasion and butchery on the other, people cared not for the blessings of the Gospel of Christ, which the brothers longed to bring home to their hearts.

Disappointed and distressed, Lupicine and

* King of the Visigoths, plundered Rome A.D. 410. Attila, the Hun, was the "scourge" of Germany, France, and Italy, between the years 450 and 452. He was of the Calmuck race of Tartars.

Romain resolved to leave Italy, and carry the message of peace to those who had had fewer opportunities of hearing it. Like Patrick, who about the same time became the devoted Evangelist of Ireland, they sought out the benighted mountaineers of Helvetia, or Switzerland, resting among them at last, after visiting several other countries.

Lupicine chose for his abode one of the grottoes described above. Romain, bound no doubt by the ties of brotherly affection, made himself a hermitage, like his brother's, in a lonely valley not far off. Later there sprang up on this spot the celebrated Convent of Romainmotiers. Would that its inmates, and those of like institutions, had kept the same spirit which distinguished these early and faithful missionaries of the Cross.

Lupicine, without acquiring the fame which thus connected itself with the name of Romain, left, notwithstanding, deep and worthy traces on the affections and memories

of the people. His modest retreat was situated beside the very spring which still bubbles up on the spot, and it so happens that its waters possess a slight mixture of sulphur, which gives them certain medicinal effects. In after ages the ignorance of the people was imposed upon by those who should have known better, and they were taught to see a miracle in the working of cures, which God's providence had plainly enough connected with what we call the *natural* properties of these mineral waters. Lupicine made no pretence to the possession of more than human powers, and sought no superstitious reverence from the natives who soon gathered round him. What he did do was this:—

He remembered how the Apostles of Jesus were taught and enabled by Him to heal the sufferings of the afflicted as well as to instruct their souls. He rejoiced to think that it was now in his power to relieve the wants of the ill-fed and poorly-clad dwellers on the mountain side; and he applied himself with

all his power to observe the effects of the waters on the different complaints and constitutions of the objects who sought his advice. His early education in Rome gave him many and great advantages, and by the blessing of God he became so skilful in giving advice and relief, that multitudes flocked to his cell. Nor were the herbs and roots overlooked by him in his frequent and distant excursions. These too yielded many and various remedies, which he learned to apply to all kinds of ailments and diseases, thereby gaining the confidence of the poor heathen Helvetians, and preparing their hearts for the gospel.

This gospel of peace Lupicine never forgot or neglected. Wherever an opportunity offered he spoke of the sickness of the soul, and of Jesus the good physician, whose own choicest blood is the balm to heal our hurt. Many a care-worn mother carried back to her mountain home, along with the infant who had been saved from inflammation or convulsions, some precious word about the

Holy Lamb of God, which she would think over amid her toils, and drop as a seed into the young heart, which would otherwise have been steeped in idolatry. Many a grey-haired goat-herd, as he counted his scattered flock, remembered the parable of the sheep and the goats, and prayed that he might be on the right hand of the Good Shepherd, in the day when He shall "count up his people." And not a few of the seigneurs* or landlords, who took offence at the teaching of the hermit-doctor, when he told them of their duties toward their tenants and their slaves, went home with their consciences aroused, and their feelings warmed to some regard for those whom they had been used to look upon as little better than beasts of burden.

Thus it came to pass that by his active charity and his faithful preaching, Lupicine gained great influence in the neighbourhood. Oftentimes he would make expeditions as

* These were the petty Burgundian chiefs, who lorded it cruelly over the people whom they had subdued.

far as Avenches, the celebrated Roman Aventicum, and Lausanne, on the Lake of Geneva, both of which cities had received Christianity in the course of the third century. At other times he would halt at the town of Orbe, taking advantage of fairs and markets to convey the message of salvation to the crowds assembled on these occasions from all the country round.

Once he made his way to Geneva to sue for justice before Chilperic, brother of Gondobald, King of Burgundy, on behalf of the oppressed peasants. He returned loaded with honours and presents, and this circumstance caused him to receive no small attention from the inhabitants of Switzerland. All looked up to him with affectionate reverence, and many opened both ear and heart to receive the tidings he proclaimed.

All this is a long preface to the simple and unsensational story which I am about to relate. But patience, dear reader. Let us have clearly before us the general view of the man and his work, and then we shall

better understand the details, which will serve as specimens of his doings. Forty years had now passed since, in the year A.D. 450, or thereabouts, Lupicine and Romain began their work of evangelisation. The latter had already gone to his rest. Lupicine's efforts had met with the greater success, because God had prepared the hearts of the Swiss by long years of invasion and calamity. The Romans had withdrawn from this and other countries early in the century, and hordes of Germans, Vandals, and other barbarians had swept the land at their will. The Burgundians, a tribe of Vandals, had now settled into a kingdom, and their chiefs were in possession of the districts in which the good hermit spent the largest portion of his time and labour.

Hermit, indeed, he was in spirit, in simplicity of life and in love of retirement. But you would be very much mistaken if you pictured him as wrapped up in solitary meditation, or as sauntering about and living upon the alms of the benevolent, after the

fashion of the idle monks and friars who abounded in later generations. True he received with gratitude the free-will offerings of the kind country-folk; but withal he toiled diligently with his own hands, and ungrudgingly bestowed his services wherever he could relieve pain, or settle a dispute, or perform the sacred offices of religion, or breathe the gospel of peace into the ear of a dying pagan. Of these comparatively few were left along the foot of the Jura chain at the close of the fifth century. Most of the towns and villages had embraced Christianity, and the worship of idols was kept up only among scattered families and individuals, who still clung to their superstitions.

It was a lovely autumn morning. The sun was darting his first ruddy rays over the masses of tinted foliage, when the hermit quitted his cave, and cast a lingering look upon the bright prospect before him. "Fair land!" he exclaimed, shaking his snowy locks. "My poor people! when will the Lord have mercy on the wandering sheep,

who still roam far and wide amid the rough briars of the wilderness! Oh, my God! shall I not behold the day, when all the inhabitants of this beautiful country shall know the name of the true and only God? But for me there is left a short hour more of combat, and then, Romain, Romain, my brother beloved, may I be found ready to join thee in thy repose, and hear the gracious 'Well done' of the Master!"

The fine and still hale old man was naturally tall and well-made; but he was now somewhat bent by age. Deep feeling and pure love might be traced in the lines of his noble countenance, which still, at the age of nearly seventy-five, was lighted up with all the animation of youth. His long white beard fell down over a simple habit of coarse cloth. His plain straw hat, shading his brow, and his walking-staff held firmly in his hand, seemed to show that he was prepared for a distant expedition. His feet were equipped with half-boots, made from the skin of a huge brown bear, and fashioned by his own hand.



The old man fixed a gaze of emotion on the Alpine range, whose snow-clad peaks bounded the horizon, rising above the dark woods which covered the plain, and uttered in a tone of mingled awe and cheerfulness, " 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.' 'My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.' " *

At length Lupicine turned, and with a wooden bar closed the oaken door, which he had fitted to the rocky mouth of the grotto. One thing more remained to be done ere he set forth on his morning round. The hermit was not without his tender points, and never having felt inclined to make a pet of dog, or goat, or bird, his affections had fastened on a small geranium, which he watched and watered with all the loving care some would have bestowed upon a child. It was still warm enough to allow the precious plant to remain in the open air, and there was yet

* Psalms cxxi. and v.

promise of full many a lovely blossom ere winter should come and bid it slumber in repose. The plant had been given to the hermit by a poor woman in Lausanne, where it was looked upon as a great rarity, in return for his kind exertions in saving the life of a delicate son, and leading him on his sick-bed to the knowledge of his Saviour. Henceforth his flower had been the constant cheerer of his solitude. He bade it adieu when he left his humble cave, it smiled sweetly on him when he returned; he watered it, plucked off the drooping leaves and cut away the withered blossoms as carefully and lovingly as if it could feel and speak. There was a ledge in the natural rock, near the rude opening which formed the doorway. A little art had forced a passage through the narrow partition of rock which separated the back of this ledge or shelf from the grotto within. Thus air and light found their way inside, when for comfort or security the entrance of the cave was closed. And on the shelf described the much-loved ger-

anium found its usual resting-place, only being removed to a warmer hiding-place within, when the snows began to fall. The watering of his thirsty little friend was the last loving duty performed by the hermit, ere, after concluding his devotions, he walked slowly toward the stream.

Being accustomed, partly from age, partly for lack of company, to speak his thoughts aloud, he thus conversed with himself as he strolled somewhat doubtfully forward :—

“And now what path shall I take ? Whither shall I wend my steps to-day ? In days of yore I would have traversed the dark-shadowing forest of Chassagnes, and refreshed my soul by communion with my dearly-loved brother ; or I would have made my way to Baulmes, or Orbe, and seen how my Lord’s work advances in those busy scenes. But to-day He calls me not thitherward. It is solitude I need, that I may prepare for death by often meditating on eternity. The excitement of the world has never been an attraction to me ; now it is

most distasteful: the world is passing away from me, and I care not to go in pursuit of it. It is peace, the peace to be found and enjoyed in solitude alone, that I feel I want for my soul. To the Wood of Ferreyres!* that is the spot where I shall find the sweetest resting-place, and its soft mossy carpet is just suited for an old man's tottering step. The good Lord will lead me by the best path, and He will prepare me in solitude for the work He has in store for me this day."

With these words the old man quickened his pace, descended the hill, turned to the right and plunged into a thick coppice. Following a faint track, known to himself alone, he was soon lost beneath the arched roof of the forest.

* Now La Ferrière, about three miles from La Sarraz where four sisters have an Orphan House and Cripples' Home.

CHAPTER II.

. WAR AND PEACE.

"The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree,
And seem by Thy sweet bounty made
For those who follow Thee."

COWPER.

AFTER walking about a quarter of an hour in a southerly direction, the hermit caught the sound of a cascade at some little distance farther on. As though the recollection of some familiar spot came with the sound upon his memory, he pushed eagerly forward. A close barrier of thorny briars presently stopped his way, while the sound of the falling water, echoing tumultuously from the rocks, told him that he was all but

within reach of the object of his search. Pushing the brambles adroitly aside, or bending beneath their outstretched arms, as one used to thread the mazes of a tangled brake, he shortly found himself in presence of a scene which to this day excites the admiration of all who visit the spot.

In front rose a semi-circular rampart of rocks some sixty feet in height. At the top of these, and hanging most picturesquely over the precipice, grew some maples and dark old pine-trees. After pouring down from the summit of these rocks, through an opening between the pines and maples, the cascade divided into two streams, which ran bubbling and boiling away,—the one toward the north, the other, by a chain of smaller falls, in a more westerly direction. Both, however, as though unwilling to part, in a short time united their forces, and formed a transparent sheet of water, in which were reflected and contrasted the dark face of the water-worn rocks, the deep foliage of the trees, and the brilliant colours of the rain-

low glory, which hovered amid the dancing spray.

The roar of the water, the wild solitariness of the scene and the numberless juttings and hollows among the fancifully-shaped rocks, charmed the poetical imagination of the good and gifted lover of nature. Often was he wont to retire hither, and seek solitude and repose beneath the shade of a well-known oak. He had made himself a small seat, directly opposite the cascade. Hence he never tired of watching the ceaseless dash of water, breaking into foamy waves below, or the pearl-like drops of spray which glistened on the rocks beside the fall. At that time a few shepherds from the neighbourhood were the only visitors acquainted with the cascade. Now strangers flock from many a league to witness the beauties of the Pool of Conflans, which still retains the name given to it long ago as the *Confluence* of the Venoge and the Veyron.

While seated on his rustic couch, and noticing with delight the effects of light and

shade, which a painter might vainly try to imitate, the attention of Lupicine was caught by an object, living, though almost motionless, on a piece of moss-covered rock, rising perpendicularly from the waves. It was an otter keeping silent and unwearied sentry over the high seas of her little ocean, eagerly watching for some luckless trout which might pass beneath her wave-washed fortress. While yet many yards distant, the dainty * watcher had heard the old man's step, and had impatiently beaten time upon the water with her strong, tapering tail. As soon, however, as she perceived the object of her momentary alarm, she turned her eye back toward the current, certain before night to swim homeward with the booty, which the teeming waters of the Venoge never failed to supply.

* On seeing a fish, the otter slides noiselessly into the water, turns and twists about as easily as a fish does, and as gracefully returns to land with its prey. It only eats the flakes at the back of the fish's neck, and leaves the remainder for less fastidious animals.—See *Wood's Illustrated Nat. History*.

The hermit too gazed upon the stream, the same for ever, and yet for ever shifting, and new-born moment by moment. His fancy followed the wavelets on to the spreading sea, and he prayed that when the waters of his life should mingle with the tides of eternity, he might at least have left traces upon the hearts and lives of men deeper and more lasting than the ripples on the unstable river.

How long the reflections of the old man might have continued, it is impossible to say, but at this moment a slight sound made him start and look round. To his surprise he saw, a few paces off, and on the same side of the river as himself, two young urchins, the sound of whose approach the noise of the waterfall had prevented his hearing before. The boys appeared to have followed the course of one of their goats, which the hermit now observed on the further bank, perched on an overhanging point of rock, and cropping the moss from its surface. The curiosity, however, of the young goatherds had led them to pick their way across the stream,

finding, as they did, a natural ford by the help of rocks and pebbles. The loud cries with which they greeted the ears of the unsuspecting hermit, plainly told him that he must not reckon upon a visit of friendly guests, and a glance at their rude and ragged attire showed him at once that he had before him a pair of juvenile pagans.

It has been said that the mass of the population looked upon the aged Lupicine with feelings of gratitude and esteem. There were notwithstanding some, who, under the still remaining influences of heathenism, cherished towards him a superstitious hatred. "Is not this," they would exclaim, "the fellow who has come to drive away our gods, and put down our merry fête-days?" While they thus secretly feared the messenger of the exalted Saviour, they were for the most part glad to keep out of his way. The two young barbarians, however, finding him alone in so out-of-the-way a place, were delighted at the opportunity of at least making sport of him.

"Ha!" cried one of them, dancing round the old man with strange and uncouth gestures, "the bald-head, the bald-head has seen us, has he? look at the bald-head!"

His companion approached more quietly on the other side, and raising his arm, brandished a stout oaken cudgel, as though intending mischief.

The old man rose and advanced a few paces without saying a word. Upon this the invaders drew back, afraid, they scarcely knew why.

"Thoughtless ones," exclaimed the hermit, in a solemn voice, "if you pay no respect to the garments of a servant of God, are you not ashamed to insult my grey hairs?"

Upon this they redoubled their shouts and antics, and one of them threw his stick with such good aim, that it fell within a few inches of Lupicine's feet. For a moment the man of God felt his anger rise within him, and he was almost carried away by his feelings of righteous indignation. He thought of Elisha at Bethel, and was on the point of

cursing his young assailants in the name of the Lord his God. Then came thoughts of peace and forgiveness, and the recollection of Him who said, "*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of!*" The storm was hushed: the light of Christian love again shone in his soul. With longer strides, but with kindly intent, he sought to overtake the young goatherds, who, however, appeared anything but willing to allow him to come up with them. Terrified at the determined air of the old man, and perhaps more or less disturbed in conscience at the thought of their behaviour, they ran pell-mell down the slope, bent upon getting the stream as soon as possible between themselves and their pursuer.

But as it happened, one of the luckless pair made a false step in his headlong flight, slid down the mossy bank on which he was planting his foot, and fell with a heavy plunge into the foaming waves beneath. The water was not deep enough to do him any harm, and the hermit, who was close at

the boys' heels, knowing there was nothing to fear, could not help smiling at the rueful countenance of the urchin. He stretched out his hand towards him, with the words,—

“Ah, my child! take heed and profit by the lesson the Almighty has sent thee. Never more blaspheme His holy name, nor mock the bald-head, as you call him, who is His aged minister. He could, if he chose, send on thee this day raging bears, who would tear thee and thy companion in pieces.”

The boys stood aghast for a few seconds, not understanding in the least the force or the meaning of what sounded like an awful imprecation. Then, thinking he had bewitched the stream, they fled at full speed, uttering, when beyond his reach, far-echoing cries of defiance. Their discordant shrieks were indeed the expiring cries of Idolatry, as she was about to abandon her last strongholds. The old man standing forth on the other side of the waters, with words of peace on his lips, and a fervent prayer in his heart, was

the representative of Christianity, welcoming a new country to its embrace, and offering the free gift of all gospel blessings.

It was now far on in the day, and Lupicine felt no inclination to return to his wonted seat. He took up his staff, struck into the wood, and made for his cave. Who was his next visitor ?

CHAPTER III.

THE LITTLE MAIDEN OF DESIDERES.

"Thy gracious care will send that way
Some spirit full of glee, yet taught
To bear the sight of dull decay,
And nurse it with all pitying thought."

KEBLE.

ON arriving at the outskirts of the forest, the hermit perceived a little maiden stooping almost down to the ground. She appeared to have her whole attention engaged in searching for something in the grass. She was standing on the brink of the river Nozon, and a little basket upon the pathway, full of herbs, mosses, and water-plants, showed that she had come there with some other purpose beside that of amusement. Hearing a foot-step approaching, the young plant-seeker turned hastily round.

“Paca!” said the old man in a tone of surprise; “you here all alone, and so far from any dwelling? Take care,” he continued, noticing the rank grass by which she was surrounded, “this is a dangerous place for young girls, — there are many vipers here!”

Even to the present day the large adder is found in the meadows near the Nozon, but at the time of our narrative it was extremely common. Often had the hermit been called upon to exercise his knowledge of the healing art in treating their venomous bites. There, just as though it had come at the very call of the charmer, one of these dark lithe creatures noiselessly glided from beneath a tuft of grass, swayed its small flattened head from side to side, and then, with quivering tongue and fiery eyes, poised itself in the very act to fasten its deadly fangs on the arm of the unconscious maiden. Happy was it for the damsel that she had at her side so bold and so experienced a protector. His staff was raised in a moment, and the reptile

lay at her feet writhing in the agonies of death. Pale and trembling, Paca realised the peril from which she had been rescued ; overpowered with emotion, she threw herself into the hermit's arms.

"My father," she cried, "my dear, good father ! you are always doing some kindness. Wherever you go, you shower blessings around you."

Lupicine raised the repulsive beast on his staff, and said slowly, "It is the Almighty Saviour whom you must thank, and not His unworthy servant. 'Behold,' He said, 'I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, . . . and nothing shall by any means hurt you' (Luke x. 19). So spake He to His disciples when He was on earth, and the faithful promise continues sure even in this our day. Do you remember, Paca, the story we read together last winter, about St. Paul and the viper of Melita ?"

"Yes, my father, and often and often have I since thought over the lessons you taught me from it."

Paca was a girl of not quite fifteen, and short for her age, but with an intelligent countenance. Her sweet smile and the bright expression of her face showed how delighted she was to find her aged friend in this retired spot. She lived with her mother at the little hamlet of Désiderès, now called *Disy*, about half a league beyond Sarraz, or, as the hut-crowned hill was then called, *Serrates*. The hermit had taught the child to love her Saviour, as well as to read some pages in his holy books. He had soon found in his young scholar a gentle, tender spirit, and a mind eager for instruction. She had become one of his special favourites, and often on his Sunday rounds he would halt at her mother's house, and spend such leisure hours as he could claim in the companionship of his young friend. She in return had taught him to take increasing interest in the marvels of God's creating hand. Plants and flowers, which he had been wont to seek for the sake of their healing virtues, he now loved and admired for their own sweetness and beauty.

The squirrel, the chamois, the marmot and the wheeling lammer-geier,* not to say our friend the fish-loving otter, were all the hermit's friends, and this, in no small degree, because he had observed the delight which Paca took in watching them. It was no idle curiosity which led these Christian friends,—for such in spite of the difference of years they were,—to notice particularly on the Lord's Day the handiwork of Nature's God. As they watched, and conversed, or thought, their spirits seemed on that day specially in harmony with His, who rested the seventh day; and looking abroad on all the works of His Creation, pronounced them "very good."

But to return. "What are you about, my child?" continued the old man after a pause "You have not yet answered my inquiry."

"I was picking some herbs for my mother.

* A kind of Eagle,—the *Lamb Eagle*,—from its habit of carrying off lambs or kids. It is also (incorrectly) called the Bearded Vulture, from the long tufts of hair with which each nostril is clothed. It is the Ossifrage of Scripture (Wood's Bible Animals.)

Her cough has come back with the approach of winter, and the poor mother wants nursing a little. And then these mosses, these lovely mosses ; look, father ! How prettily they will adorn her window, when they are dried and put round some flowers?"

And she showed him her basket full of pretty mosses, herbs, and curious water-plants, &c. The old man took in his hand a tuft of moss, and fixing his eyes on it, exclaimed : " See, my child, what a world of wonders there is even in this single tuft of moss, which the passer-by tramples under foot. Each single one of these tiny stalks is full of grace and beauty. Root and blossom and seed are all perfect. They are like a forest of infant trees, and every one of them tells us of a Creator's wisdom and love. Some day perchance 'the flowers of the field' may be studied by men as they deserve to be. Then will they find astonishing tokens of the skill and tenderness of the Almighty. But, ah me ! how poor is our eye-sight, what a short way can we pierce into these mysteries !"

They were now walking on towards the grotto, the maiden listening with delight to all the old man said.

"But, father," added she, "what a long time it is since you came to our cottage! Will you not come next Lord's Day? My mother is poorly: it will comfort her so much if you will come and talk to her."

"Yes, my child, it is true; but the old man's feeble steps cannot bear him so far as they used to do. However, be this as it may, I will come, please God, next Sunday, after Evensong. Soon the night will be here, in which I can work no more. But you, my child, come and see me sometimes yourself this winter, and if God give me time and strength, we will again read together one of the Memoirs of our Lord."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" cried Paca, clasping the old man's hand in both her own. "But you will come; won't you?" she added, looking up into his kindly face. "There is old Ursula too, who wants so much to see and hear you."

"Ah! how does she fare?" replied the man of God, with affectionate interest. "True, I have forgotten her far too long, poor old body. Heathen though she be, she thinks seriously sometimes, and, like us, has a soul to be saved."

"Alas! she still blasphemes God's holy name, though I was beginning to hope there was some change in her. She used to come and see us more frequently, and when you last celebrated the Holy Eucharist at our house, she was present, though she did not join. It was the first time she had witnessed such a scene, and the sight of the bread and wine, and our simple manner of partaking of them, seemed to give her faith and hope for herself.* But that old sorceress of the mountain never loses sight of Ursula, and has again enticed her to their idol-

* Lupicine is supposed in this little story to have come in the first place as an ordained priest from Italy. He is throughout styled simply the hermit, because as such he was chiefly known, and because the good old word priest, prester, or presbyter, is liable to misconstruction.

atrous feasts, so you see the poor old creature has now sunk lower than ever."

You will want to know who Ursula was. She was an old dame who lived with her two sons in a cottage, a few minutes' walk from the village. It was one of those few remaining households in which heathenism lodged side by side with the religion of the Cross. Her two sons were Christians, but the mother as yet clung to the belief of her forefathers, and could not make up her mind to abandon her idols. Her chief hindrance lay in the influence of an old heathen priestess, named Hulda, to whom Paca alluded in conversing with the hermit. Her abode was among the mountain caverns, and though most of the people round had learned to pity rather than to fear her, she was still known by her old title,—the Water Witch. Hulda lost no opportunity of doing her utmost to stifle the convictions which arose in Ursula's mind, and she succeeded but too well. Entangled in the meshes of sin, the poor creature closed her heart against the appeals of the man of God.

"Yes," he said, in reply to Paca's account, "I will come ; and pray that God may soften her heart."

At this moment they reached the steep path, which led to the village of Serrates. Some peasants were following a heavy two-wheeled cart, drawn by a pair of shaggy oxen, and laden with long poles, which trailed along the ground behind. The simple-minded villagers bared their heads as the old man passed, and bowed respectfully as he bestowed on them his benediction. Here the hermit wished his young companion good-night, and slowly mounting the rugged hill, at the top of which his hermitage could be seen, was soon at the entrance of the grotto.

Before unbarring his door the old man sat down to take breath. He wiped the perspiration from his brow, and sat some time with his arms crossed upon the top of his staff, gazing at the woods and plain. The long shadows of the Jura had already stolen over his abode, while the parting rays of the

autumnal sun were vainly trying to illuminate cloud-capt Combin, though they still rested on the summit of the Savoy Alps, which, with the "monarch of mountains" above them, rose beyond Lausanne and Lake Leman. His thoughts travelled toward the sunny plains of Italy, and after musing awhile in silence, he thus broke out aloud : "Yes, it is here that I have found repose and peace; 'tis here my God wills that I should be, and here will He come to call me to my home. Ah! it was a hard struggle when I turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of my mother and my friends, and quitted the wealth and honours which smiled on me at Rome. Yet, oh, my gracious God, Thou hast loaded me with blessings far more and far greater than I had ever dared to hope for. Thou hast given me a share in Thy delightful service, lightened by communion with my Saviour and with His Spirit of strength and comfort, besides the affection of a people who love me beyond my deserts."

The hermit now entered his humble dwell-

ing, greeted his geranium with a smile and an exclamation of affectionate welcome, and partook of his frugal repast. It consisted of a slice of barley bread, a handful of watercresses from the stream, and an egg, boiled upon the ashes of a few sere branches kindled by his flint and steel. This was his regular supper, and the peace of God and the presence of His Master made it a richer feast than the banquets of the Cæsars. A short time spent in prayer and thanksgiving closed the day, and then the old man laid himself to rest upon his simple couch, and fell into a child-like slumber, while the Angels kept sentry at his side.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HERMIT AT HOME.

"I have been in my chamber lone,
Thinking of ages past and gone,
Nor voice nor sound have been with me,
But I have felt the glow of the spirit free
With the voice of the soul I have been endued
And have spurned at the thought of *Solitude*!"
"SOLITUDE"—*Author unknown.*

THE sun has not yet risen above the Jungfrau, and as the hermit sleeps this morning somewhat longer than is his wont, we will take a peep through his rude casement, and glance round the rustic cell, which has been his castle, chapel and palace these five and forty years past.

It consists of a natural cavern in the rock, neither high nor roomy, but large and lofty

enough for the modest desires of its possessor. The floor is neatly covered with a layer of fine dry sand, and the bare walls are adorned with tapestry of various kinds of moss, which gives the chamber an air of warmth and comfort. It seems as if the occupant, without wishing to be luxurious or self-indulgent, yet were not unwilling to make himself *at home*, and did not refuse the aids of art and taste in making that home, solitary and remote though it might be, worthy of a citizen of heaven. Nor are there wanting traces of rough work and manly toil, such as must have put Lupicine's strength to full exercise, even in the days of his prime. There is solid masonry forming the arched stone-work above the oaken door, and many a long hour's hammering must have been spent upon chipping off the uncouth points of rock, which around and above offended the eye, or threatened ugly wounds to an unwary visitor.

A low ridge, or narrow platform of rock, runs almost across the cave, dividing it into two nearly equal portions, and conveniently

leaving a space, by way of door, for passing from one to the other.* It was Romain who had recommended his brother to move his straw pallet from the floor of the inner chamber to the platform just described. "It was drier," he said, "and more airy; and if Lupicine denied himself the pleasures of ease and selfish enjoyment, there was no reason for his neglecting the health of that body with which he was to serve his Master?" These words often came back to the mind of Lupicine, and the thought of what Romain would have done often helped him out of a difficulty, when his mind and conscience were at a loss as to what was fitting and proper.

The front portion of the grotto receives the larger amount of light through the opening which we may call the Geranium window. This is the hermit's study and oratory. Here are seen no relics or superstitious adornments, such as too soon found their way into

* Similar to the division still to be seen in the grotto of St. B  at, on the Lake of Thun.

the Hermitages of Longeborgne and Ste. Véréne. The only attempt at carving is a bold outline engraving, cut deep into the smooth face of the rock on one side, representing our Saviour on the cross, with one or two symbols and inscriptions copied from the Catacombs at Rome. These remind Lupicine of some ancestors whose names are enrolled among "the noble army of martyrs." A little wooden footstool hard by shows that here the follower of his Lord is in the habit of making those daily petitions which have been the secret of his success.

But the hermit's cell is also his library and dispensary. Close to the window is a small table, made by Lupicine's own hands, on which may be seen his small but precious store of jars and phials, marked with vellum labels. A shelf of deal, fixed in the rock, supports his scanty stock of books. There is the large parchment roll, containing the four Gospels, copied by his own hand. Most of the other books of Scripture are there also, not in the handy form in which we now pos-

sess them, but more like what they first were, when Moses wrote the "*Going out*" (from Egypt), or Baruch took down the burden of *Israel, Judah and the Nations* from the dictation of Jeremiah.* There is room also for some of the Homilies of Chrysostom,—John of the Golden mouth, of Byzantium,†—and the "Hymns of the Martyrs," collected by the devout Bishop St. Protas. This latter had been given by one of the Bishop's own disciples to Lupicine, on one of his expeditions to preach the gospel at Lausanne. Two or three rolls, containing manuscripts of his own composition, complete the literary possessions of the hermit.

But now the sun is up, and Lupicine has

* Jer. xxxvi, 2 ; 32.

† Patriarch of Constantinople between the years A.D. 398 and 408. He was much beloved by the people, but his boldness made him unpopular with the Empress Eudoxia, and he was banished from Constantinople. He died A.D. 407, aged 60, leaving many valuable works. He gained the above title from his eloquence. The Prayer of St Chrysostom is well known.

started from his couch. The coverings are neatly spread on one side, and after a short prayer of self-consecration he retires to his lavatorium, a quiet little cove, hollowed out at a bend in the stream, and fenced off with palisades, where he makes a point, unlike some sainted solitaires, of washing himself summer and winter daily, from the beginning to the close of the year. Ere long he has returned to his grotto and read his morning portion of Holy Scripture, and a long one it is too, from choice not by constraint. Now he kneels in prayer, and turns into petitions for himself and others the subjects which have been impressed upon his mind. Then follow his intercessions, as a help to which the old man walks many a time up and down the level space between the cave and the path toward the plain. Ursula, we may be sure, is not forgotten, and so earnestly is his heart drawn out on behalf of this wandering sheep, that he falls again on his knees and wrestles for her endangered soul.

His plain repast over, the hermit takes up from his table, almost without thinking of it, a roll of his former meditations. The memories of days long past flock into his mind, and he is for a time lost in reverie.

In quitting the city of Rome, Lupicine had not only abandoned riches and fame. He had early shown talents, the exercise of which would have given him the greatest pleasure as an artist and an author. As a poet too he had much natural taste, which he had cultivated by reading and committing to memory choice passages from the Greek and Latin classics. These pursuits he had for the most part left behind, not despising them, when used as "talents," or entrusted loans, in the service of the Great Master, but because there was little opportunity for following them in his course of mountain missions. Yet he now and then added a sonnet or hymn to the collections of his youth, and could still smile, or sigh, or drop a half-happy tear over these written traces of earlier life and its emotions. The follow-

ing is his *Elegy on the death of his brother Romain* :—

Fare-thee-well, brother mine ! thou art gone to thy rest,
To the bosom of Jesus, the home of the blest,
With the Father of spirits in glory to dwell,
Free for ever from sin : fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well !

What heart can conceive the o'erwhelming surprise,
When this veil of dull earth was withdrawn from thine
eyes !

That rapture ecstatic no mortal may tell ;
I shall taste it anon : fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well !

Thou hast borne uncomplaining the burden of life ;
Thou hast fought for thy Lord in the van of the strife ;
'Mid the concourse of men, in the hush of thy cell,
Thou wert true to thy post : fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well !

There are many to greet thee ; not friendless and lone
Thou shalt stand in the light that encircles the throne ;
There are bands gone before,—and their number shall
swell,—

To be gems in thy crown : fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well !

Ne'er again may I watch for thy coming to share
The pure hours of delight that enlivened my care ;
Yet the Spirit of comfort each murmur shall quell,
As I think on thy bliss : fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well !

The hermit could not restrain the tear that rose with the 'recollection' of past mercies, and for a long time he sat, with his head buried in his hands, wrapped in deep meditation. A slight tap at the door aroused him from his dream. He got up and opened it, and there to his surprise stood his young friend Paca, with a small basket on her arm.

"Why, Paca," he exclaimed, "this is good of you indeed to come and see your old friend so soon!"

But catching sight of the child's pale and distressed countenance, he at once became convinced that she had come upon some errand of sorrow.

"Father," said the maiden, her voice trembling with emotion, "here is a basket of eggs which my mother sends you. If, however, you can bear the fatigue, she begs you will come immediately. Old Ursula has fallen from the top of the barn, and cut her head dreadfully. She has only a

few hours to live. Jacques (her son) is heart-broken. He longs to see you, believing that you may still be able to do her some good."

Paca was quite out of breath, and was obliged to stop. Then, almost immediately, she added, in a tone of earnest entreaty, "Oh, come, and have pity on her poor soul! The water-witch, who was passing through the village at the time, is at her bed-side, and we are afraid of her charms and incantations. Jacques especially, poor Jacques is in despair!"

Lupicine understood it all. Without losing a moment he said, "Yes, my daughter! you have no need to urge me: as long as God gives me power to drag this feeble body, the old hermit shall be found by the bed of the dying!"

He seized the case which contained salves and balsams, together with some linen for binding up wounds. Then, in less time than it has taken to describe what had happened,

he might have been seen, staff in hand, descending the hill-side path. His young companion led the way, and with loving attention cleared the stones and briars before his agitated steps.

CHAPTER V.

THE HERMIT AND THE WATER-WITCH.

"Thou prisoned, ruined, unforgiven !
Yet fit to conquer all—but Heaven."

CHOLY.

ON the way to Désidères, which was about a league from the hermit's dwelling, Lupicine learned from Paca how the accident had happened.

Near the cottage was a barn, where Jacques and Julien housed and threshed the barley from the few acres of land belonging to their widowed mother. Above the barn was a loft, which contained the trusses of hay for the use of the three cows in winter, and some sacks of threshed barley saved from the good harvest of last year. The loft, or granary as it was called, was reached

by a wooden ladder from the outside. Early that morning Ursula had gone up into the granary to get some barley for the chickens, not liking to trouble Julien, though he had often begged his mother to leave this to him. Ursula was getting old, her sight was failing, and she suffered from occasional giddiness. One of these fits had most likely come upon her as she was beginning to come down the ladder, since the barley was found strewed upon the ground beside the empty basket. Both her sons had left the house shortly after she went to the granary, and having to see to a sick cow in the farther meadow, had been absent some time. Finding the house empty, they had gone out to the yard, where they beheld their poor mother quite insensible, and bathed in blood.

On hearing of the accident one of the neighbours kindly ran in and helped Jacques and Julien to wash the poor head, which was cut and bruised fearfully. They thought for a time that she was dead, but at last she woke from her swoon, and broke out into

exclamations of wild delirium. This was more alarming than the state in which she lay before, and the horror of her sons was increased when Hulda the water-witch burst in and began her spells and incantations.

Had Ursula been in her full senses she would have been cowed by the presence of Hulda. As it was, her frantic cries and broken sentences, interrupted by moans of pain, seemed to speak of a violent struggle going on within her bosom. It was almost impossible to gather her meaning, but there was one quick ear which caught a word here and there, and that was enough. Paca's mother, unable to go herself and help, had bidden her daughter go and see what she could do. For a long time she thought herself in the way, and could only pray in silence and wait for an opportunity. It was she who heard the name of the hermit uttered by Ursula in the midst of her wanderings, and noticed it to Jacques. The dutiful son was surprised that in the midst of his grief and horror he had not himself

thought of the man of God. It only needed a word from him to set Paca on the track. Off she started, and arrived, as has been told already, breathless at the door of the cave. In about an hour they were at Ursula's door, and, after resting a few minutes on the bench at the threshold, the old man was at her bed-side.

A shocking sight met his eye, and told him at a glance the mischief that had been done. Ursula lay upon a low couch, motionless and still much disfigured by the blood which oozed from the wound. Her head was laid open by a terrible gash, and the unearthly rattle in the chest, which accompanied every breath she drew, spoke of death as a visitor close at hand. Jacques sat upon a low stool beside the couch, with a bucket of cold water between his knees. In this he kept plunging his mother's hands, while every now and then he sprinkled her face with vinegar. Julien, the second son, was standing at the foot of the couch, as they entered, looking from his mother's pitiable

form towards an object crouched up in a corner of the room.

It was the old witch Hulda, who dared not approach nearer to the two young men, and yet would not leave the apartment. They, on their part, were unwilling to use force in compelling her to go, and besides had some lingering traces of fear, lest she should do mischief if driven to extremities. Her appearance was strange beyond description. Deep furrows scored her brow, which was a broad and open one, and wrinkles, formed by habit, disfigured a countenance once attractive, but now wearing a settled expression of mingled gloom and ferocity. Grey straggling locks hung down in front from beneath her slouching cap of boar's hide, just leaving room for her dark flashing eyes, unrelieved by eye-lashes, to gleam forth from under her thick overhanging eye-brows. She was wrapt closely round in a patch-work cloak of bear, wild-boar and wolf-skin, paws, ears and tails, and even heads—without the skulls—hanging down in all directions. Be-

hind, her long grey hair hung in matted locks about her shoulders, and reached down to her waist, or rather to the ground upon which she was sitting.

A long forked stick lay beside her. It was peeled white, and round it was turned a spiral band of snake, frog and bat skins. In one hand she held a cup made of a dry gourd hollowed out. This contained her so-called charmed water, and she was never seen without it. From the gourd she kept sprinkling with the other hand ceiling, walls, and furniture, muttering all the while her meaningless rhymes in a low dirge-like chant.

On seeing the man of God cross the threshold, Hulda seized her staff, sprang from the floor at a bound and rushed towards the opposite door, which led to the kitchen. Here she stationed herself behind the half-closed door, darting at her rival, as she disappeared, a look of intense jealousy and detestation. It was like a venomous reptile fleeing from the hunter, and hiding in its

native bushes from the eye of its conqueror, man.

Lupicine went up straight to the bed-side of the sick woman, and closely examined the wounds she had received in her fall. He did not say a word, but sorrowfully shook his head as he caught the anxious looks of the watchers.

"Man can do nothing more," he said at length, "the only thing we can do is to pray God to have mercy on her soul. If she lives out the night, it will be a marvel."

With these words he knelt down in silence at the side of the bed. Paca had already, without waiting for example, done the same. The rest of the little group followed, and for some minutes nothing was heard but the painful sound of the dying woman's oppressed breathing, mingled with the sobs of the maiden, and the old man's broken but fervent supplications.

An hour passed slowly by. Ursula showed no sign of consciousness, scarcely any of life. At length she moved, and slowly raised

herself on the couch, fixing her eyes wildly on Julien, as he stood speechless at her feet, yet without appearing to notice him. Then, wringing her hands, she exclaimed in tones so loud and piercing that all were startled and horror-struck at her agony, "Death, oh death! it is a terrible thing to die, when one must go to hell! No, I will not die, I will not die yet! But where am I? My soul, what will become of it!"

Completely exhausted by the effort, she fell back upon the couch. A few words escaped from her lips in the fever which followed, but they were too low and unconnected to give any meaning. Hulda, however, who was still lurking in her place of retreat, was drawn forth by Ursula's piercing shriek. Like one in a frenzy she burst into the room, with her empty gourd slung over one shoulder, and her forked stick in her left hand. Then she stretched out her right, with its lean shrivelled fingers clenched tightly together, in a threatening manner towards Lupicine, and screamed at the top



"Like one in a frenzy, she burst into the room."

of her voice, "This soul is none of yours! 'tis mine, mine for ever! Why are you come to rob me of my lawful prey? Why——"

"Peace, sorceress," interrupted Jacques, trying at the same time to keep down his mother, who caught the well-known tones of Hulda's voice, and was again roused to excitement. "Peace, prythee, and begone!"

But Julien did not wait to try the effect of words. Stripling as he was, and barely twenty, he was more daring and more muscular than his gentle brother Jacques. Paca saw something was going to happen, and looked imploringly towards Julien, who at any other time would have followed her wishes as quietly as a weaned lamb. Now he heeded her not, nor the presence of the white-headed servant of Jehovah. Scarcely master of himself, he sprang forward, seized Hulda by the arm and swung her so violently round that she almost fell upon the floor. Pushing her roughly through the door-way into the kitchen, and following her

closely as she retreated, trembling with fear and rage, toward the house-door, he dismissed her with these words, his voice thick with passion as he spoke, "Avaunt! and hear what I say. If ever I hear thy voice croaking under this roof again, I will not answer for the consequences. Now take thyself off! I should be sorry to lay hands on an old woman, even on a sorceress like thee!"

The cottage door closed behind her, and at this moment Hulda found herself in the presence of a little knot of peasants, who had gathered in the middle of the road. She had before this learned to her cost the danger of exciting their anger. She fled accordingly with long strides up the hillside in the direction of the cavern, where she was wont to carry on her rites.

On reaching the top of the first rising ground, however, the water-witch stopped and turned toward the people, who stood watching her movements. Brandishing her staff above her head, she raised both arms

towards the sky, and cursed them in the name of her supposed patron deities. The mountain echoes took up the tones of her discordant voice, as though the spirits of evil were encouraging their servant the heathen enchantress, in her conflict with the religion of Him who was come to supplant them.

The villagers, meanwhile, had viewed the scene with different feelings. Some were delighted at the spirit shown by Julien, some would fain have handled her more roughly still, while a few whispered that Hulda would have her revenge.

As Julien entered the sick chamber on his return, his eye fell before the mild reproachful look of Păca. She was too kind and merciful to feel resentment even towards the unhappy Hulda, and she really feared that in his zeal Julien must have injured her arm. Julien felt that, right and just as was his cause, he had given way to temper, a fault not uncommon with him, it must be said, and he longed for the meek spirit of

his young companion. There was, however, no time for remark. Poor Ursula was in a perfectly delirious state. She vainly tried to raise herself, even on one elbow, but turned her sinking frame towards a niche on the further side of the room. Here, behind a canvas curtain, stood the family household gods, which the two sons could never persuade their mother to allow them to remove. Jacques had alway restrained Julien's impatient wish to destroy them, by reminding him that they owed honour and forbearance to their mother, even though she continued in unbelief. Then with extraordinary rapidity of voice she exclaimed,

"Hulda! Where are you? I want to see her at once! Oh, sin, sin! it gnaws my heart like a serpent; my head is on fire, but it is not that; there is a terrible weight on my heart," (and her shrunken hand convulsively pressed her bosom) "Hulda, you will rid me of it, won't you? See, there is a black kid with a white forehead; you shall have him for your sacrifice, and I promise

never to miss the monthly feast again
Oh, my sins! take it all, yes, all, I say!
twenty sheaves of best barley next harvest:
reapers, give it all to her! My God, have
mercy on a poor sinner Julien
thy mother bless thee once more
. . . . and pray God, thou”

Fever and delirium cut short her powers,
and Ursula again sank back in unconscious-
ness.

The old man felt he must make one more
effort to rescue the soul of the dying woman
from the jaws of the devourer. He bent over
her, and said slowly and distinctly,—

“Christ hath died for our sins, for thy sins,
my daughter. He hath redeemed us from
the curse and from hell. Jesus is the Son
of God, the living God, and He is thy Saviour.
Believest thou this?”

A deep groan was the only reply.

“My daughter, my daughter, believest thou
this? Jesus”

But Lupicine saw it was of no use to speak
to the poor creature herself. He fell again.

on his knees, followed by his companions, and poured forth an earnest, importunate prayer, interrupted only by the frequent 'Amen' of Jacques, and the sobs of Paca and Julien.

Then, after some minutes' silence, Ursula made a sudden and violent effort, sat upon her couch and stretched out her hands, as if about to speak. Her lips moved, and she tried to articulate, but in vain. The wild, haggard expression, however, was gone from her countenance. With one finger raised, and intently gazing upwards, she uttered one word,—“*Jesus!*” and fell back a corpse.

“Thank God!” cried the hermit, rising from his knees. “Your mother has long known what is the way of peace, though held back by her superstitions. I make no doubt that the Spirit of truth led her at the last, through a fierce struggle, to Him whose holy name she invoked. *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, (in faith and sincerity), shall be saved!*”

After again praying with the little mourn-

ing group, and promising to be with them on the third morning for the funeral, Lupicine withdrew, and returned to his cave, pondering on the events of the day.

CHAPTER VI.

A TRIAL OF TEMPER.

"Whate'er my God ordains is right ;
His will is ever just ;
Howe'er He orders now my cause,
I will be still and trust ;
He is my God ;
Though dark my road,
He holds me that I shall not fall ;
Wherefore to him I leave it all."

C. WINKWORTH.

ABOUT a month after the death of Ursula there was a considerable fall of snow. Although the hermit's home was at the foot of the Jura, and not on their higher slopes, and the Jura, as most of my readers are aware, by no means reach the height of the Mont Blanc range, or of what are now called the Bernese Oberland, there was still quite enough

snow about Disy and la Sarraz to make Paca and her mother uneasy about their old friend in his hermitage. They entreated him to come to them for the winter, and at last persuaded him at least to come to their house from the Saturday to the Monday. This would make his exertions on the Lord's Day more easy, and render his presence among his little flock more certain than it could otherwise have been.

On returning one Monday afternoon to his cave, Lupicine was surprised to see traces of some visitor having been to the place during his absence. The footprints in the snow were those of women or boys, but the tracks were much confused.

Lupicine's eye caught the bar, which had been hastily thrust into the socket by some one not accustomed to that mode of fastening. A sad sight met him on entering his little domicile.

The table lay overturned, with one leg smashed, in the middle of the outer division of the grotto, while the precious jars and phials were strewn upon the floor, many

broken, and most emptied of their valuable contents. The bed-clothing was nowhere to be seen; the poor geranium was a wreck, its leading stem having been broken by a blow from a stick, or in the fall which had shattered the pot, and strewn the mould about the cave.

But still worse was the fate of his books. The shelf was too firmly fixed to be pulled down, so that remained as it had been left. The precious rolls, however, had been swept off from their resting place and maliciously cut and torn, so that at first the old man feared they were injured beyond recovery. He picked up the scattered fragments without a murmur, and was consoled, on taking them to the light, to find, as far as he could make out, that no leaves were actually missing.

"A Christmas employment," said the old man, "to copy them out afresh; and if Jacques can get me Jerome's* Latin Trans-

* Jerome, or Hieronymus, (Hierome), third of the Latin Fathers, a most learned and studious man; born A.D. 331 (?), died at Bethlehem 420. The cave is still

lation at the fair at Avenches, I shall be able to fulfil my wish to compare it with the original as I go along."

The sight of the poor broken and uprooted geranium cost the hermit, it must be confessed, a few tears. "An enemy hath" he found himself saying aloud: but before he came to "done this," he remembered who had said:—"Pray for them that despitefully use you," and how He had acted under provocation.

The old man kneeled down forthwith, and prayed for him or those who had done him this wrong. His mind turned naturally to Hulda, and to the two boys who had molested him at the cascade. He had little doubt that one or other of these were the authors of the mischief. His earnest prayer that he might have grace heartily to forgive them, and that he might find an opportunity of 'overcoming evil with good,' at once brought

shown at Bethlehem, where he is reported to have written and studied. His translations and commentaries on the Scriptures are most valuable.

a measure of peace to his mind. He set about saving what remained of his medicines, not without many a sigh over the waste and wanton destruction of such treasures, and then kindled a fire to brighten his dismantled chamber.

Jacques and Julien had seen that the old man should not want for barley bread and dried fish, and happily the inner division of the cave had been dark enough to prevent the discovery and ransacking of his little store of provisions. Paca's pet pullet had just begun to lay, and she had insisted on his bringing three eggs with him that morning, while her mother had added a skin of plain *vin du pays*, against the increasing cold. Lupicine thankfully partook of the kind offerings of his friends, and as he moistened a crust of bread in his cup of wine, the words, "Do this in remembrance of Me," came unsought into his mind, and his heart overflowed with joy.

The day passed in mending the broken table, planting in a fresh jar the poor leaf-shorn

geranium, and planning ways and means to procure fresh medicines, and purchase the long-desired copy of Jerome's Bible, with parchments for copying out the injured portions of his sacred manuscripts.

As the week passed on there was a thaw, and on the Thursday at noon Paca appeared, with anxious inquiries from her mother after the hermit's health, and with three more eggs in her basket, and a goat's-milk cheese.

The maiden might not have discovered the misfortune which had befallen her aged friend, had she not noticed how painfully he moved about, and how he winced from time to time when raising his arm from his side.

"Have you fallen, father?" she asked in alarm; "what makes you halt so often, as you walk across the cave, and why do you move your arm so stiffly?"

"Old age, in part, my child," answered the old man with a quiet smile, "and in part a cold in my limbs. This thaw is almost harder to bear than the snow we have had lately."

"Where are your rugs, father?" asked Paca hastily, as she glanced at the uncovered bed. "You have never given them away, and been sleeping in the cold, have you?"

"Somebody is the better for them," returned Lupicine, ("or the worse," he added aside); "but in truth I did not give them away. They went without the asking."

"What *do* you mean, father?" inquired Paca, seeing that something had happened. "Has any one dared to rob you?"

"Gently, gently, my little one," said the messenger of peace; "do not distress yourself on my account. This too shall turn out for good." And thereupon he related the misfortune which had fallen on him during the Sunday he had last spent at Désidères, making as light of his losses as he could.

Paca could scarcely restrain her indignation, but said she knew something would happen after the way in which Julien had turned the water-witch out of his poor mother's house. "I knew she would have a spite against you, father!" she said; "and depend upon it, she

has put up those boys you told me about to play this wicked trick."

Lupicine was of the same opinion, but he could not feel with Paca as to the importance of rousing the villagers and hunting up the offenders. He was afraid of stirring up their passions and giving room for the display of an unchristian spirit, which would hinder what he most desired, the winning over of these poor misguided pagans to the side of truth and love.

"No, Paca," he concluded, after a long discussion; "I must bear all things . . . and hope all things. God will bring all to light in due time. Let us keep our eyes and ears open; and do you join with me in constant prayer that they may be brought into the kingdom of light."

As Paca returned to her home she thought much about this unlooked-for and trying event. A hundred schemes passed through her mind, and in fancy she went through scene after scene in which she figured as the keen pursuer of the authors of the hermit's

wrongs. She was in Hulda's cavern, convicting her of her conspiracies ; she was on the bank of the Venoge, by the cascade, making the young goat-herds tremble and confess their villany ; she was kneeling before the Burgundian Seigneur, or Chief, to whom Jacques and Julien owed vassalage, and appealing to him for justice and protection.

For every turn and twist of circumstances Paca had a ready-made and unanswerable speech, as perfect as if it had come straight out of a book. The only pity was that they could not all be spoken. And, moreover, even her own little experience had told her that these pattern speeches were the very last that really came to her lips, when the occasion arose for bringing them out.

Before reaching home, however, a new thought had fixed itself in the mind of the little maiden. It would never do to let the old man remain as he was. It was not safe, now that some one had actually broken into his retreat. Besides, he was too old now to live by himself any longer : he must come

and live with them. Oh, how delightful that would be ! what readings and writing-lessons they would have, and what long talks about Lupicine's early life at Rome, and how nice it would be to get the little children of the neighbourhood to form a school, for her to be mistress, and her dear old friend the patron and master-in-chief, and

But here was her mother's house, and here was Paca's mother standing at the wicket gate, and wondering what had made her little daughter so long.

The story was soon told, and followed up by an earnest entreaty that mother would fix at once to have the hermit under her roof, supposing, that is, that he would agree to the arrangement. Paca was somewhat disappointed, when her mother said ; " Well, dear, we will think of it, and may God guide us aright." She knew, however, that her mother often thought more than she said, and she was content with letting the matter rest here.

Paca had only one other point to urge,

and that was that their old friend should not be allowed to pass another night without some covering to keep him from the cold. Jacques came by at the time and promised to run over with a coverlid and wrapper which had belonged to his mother. This was the very thing, and so for the present we may wish all round a general "*Good-night!*"

CHAPTER VII

ABROAD IN THE FOREST.

"In the shadow of evil awhile we may grope ;
And wring from our hearts a wild torrent of tears ;
Yet our lives thus bedew'd yield the sweet flower of Hope,
Whose loveliness glows in the light of the spheres.

* * * * *

"With God for our Father the weariest lot
Has something within it of precious and bland,
Mid the darkest of sorrows to us may be brought
The brightest revealings of Love's Morning Land." *

ROBERT ALLAN.

BUT what of Hulda, meantime, and her young accomplices, if Lupicine and Paca were right in thinking they knew more of

* "Poems," by Robert Allan, a young but promising writer,—full of feeling and love of nature. Better still, they are marked by true Christian sentiment.—(Edinburgh and Glasgow, J. Menzies & Co, 1871).

the cave business than they might quite like to tell? Certain it was that a few days afterwards, when a party of villagers, on hearing what had happened, went to Hulda's cavern with no very friendly intentions, they found it empty. There was no trace of its having been occupied, and a heap of smouldering ashes in one corner seemed to say that the water-witch had burnt all such of her belongings as she was unable to carry with her, and decamped from the neighbourhood.

One of the boys too had not been seen since the day before the outrage was committed, nor could anything be got out of his companion respecting him. In vain was he questioned and beaten; he could not or would not say anything more than that Arnulf, (his orphan cousin), had often said he should go away to Lausanne or Geneva as soon as the goat-tending was over, and that he was very likely gone to one of those places now. The boy's father interfered on his behalf, and here, in the absence of any settled and easy way of getting redress for his

injuries, the hermit's friends were obliged to let the matter rest.

Perhaps Hulda and Arnulf were not so far off, after all.

At least a tall figure, with hair streaming in the wind, standing out against the cold, clear evening sky on the top of the Dent de Vaulion, a strangely-shaped mountain overlooking her old haunts, appears the very image of the water-witch. Waving her staff over her head, she seems to be marking out the several quarters of the heavens, and at length with many a circle and flourish points it towards a planet which is setting above the forest of Joux, in the direction of the modern town of Pontarlier. We cannot hear her incantations, but we can follow her steps in the deepening twilight, as she plunges rapidly down the slope, and through the dark stems of the pine-trees, over the crisp, frozen snow, makes for the Lac de Joux.

This little lake may be visited by the tourist to great advantage from Romain-motier, the road leading him, between the Dent

de Vaultion and the wooded side of Mont Tendre, to le Pont, at the north-east end of the lake. Or, if he will follow the course of the Orbe upwards from Yverdun and the town of Orbes to the north side of the Dent de Vaultion, he will be amply repaid for his walk by the beauty and variety of the scenery. And should his walk be at nightfall, with the moon throwing the dark shadow of mountain and forest over the lake, while the tall pine-trees wave solemnly in the wind, as it wakes a dirge among their long, drooping branches, he will be able to fancy the very scene that presented itself to Hulda, so many hundred years ago, as she strode down the mountain-side.

But Hulda cared little for scenery. On she paced, along the north shore of the land-locked waters, which lie there in their mountain cradle, with no outlet to be seen by the eye of man. No stream is known to lead from the Lac de Joux to the Orbe, which rises * near it, or to any other river. Only,

* Rather rises again after having been lost below

as has since been discovered, there are in the bed of the lake large hollow spaces, and underground tunnels, called *entonnoirs*, by which the waters drain off, so that floods are happily rare.

Hulda's bosom knew no safe escape for the pent-up thoughts and feelings that brooded and swelled within. Ever and anon they burst forth like an overwhelming torrent, sweeping all before it, and carrying destruction in its path, as had been the case when Ursula lay dying, and when, in her anger and disappointment, she stirred up Arnulf and his companion to break into the hermit's grotto.

A few hundred yards up from the lake, Hulda found a small cleared space among the pines, and in the centre of the opening a group of rude, massive stones, piled together in the form of a heathen altar. Three slabs had been by former and forgotten inhabitants let into the ground with their upper portions standing upright above the soil, and formed the surface. It begins its course four leagues from Pont.

together three sides of a square. Above them a still larger block had been; by some unaccountable means, laid flat like a roof, leaving an opening at one end into the hollow underneath.

Since the invention of gunpowder many such ancient monuments have been broken up for building and making roads. But in Hulda's day it was not long since that broad altar-slab had reeked with human gore; and the echoes of the Jura behind and of Mont Tendre across the lake had often been roused by the shrieks of the agonised victim:

In the low chamber formed by the stones thus put together, upon a bed of dry leaves, lay the sleeping form of Arnulf. The torn half of Lupicine's rug was wrapped round him, but it was not enough to prevent his turning from side to side, and shivering from time to time in the keen air of that December evening. He had been dreaming of long-forgotten days, when his mother, a fair-haired German, was yet alive in their home beside the Moselle. He remembered well the day

when his father, upon her death, started to bring his child back to his own Helvetian birth-place; and in his dream the sorrow of leaving his early home mingled itself with the grief caused by his father's death. This had resulted from the fall of a tree, and the boy started as he seemed to hear the cracking of the timber, and vainly tried to escape from beneath it. Then passed scenes of harshness on the part of his uncle, and of toil and adventures among the mountains in the company of his cousin, who, being older and more daring than Arnulf, had led him into all kinds of mischief.

Now his thoughts were evidently running upon the hermit and his cave, and it was clear that his broken exclamations referred to their Sunday visit to the old man's abode. Though quite unintelligible in themselves, it only needed the right clue to put together out of his random words an account of their late proceedings.

All at once Arnulf started up with a loud cry :--“ He is here, the bald-head, the bald-

head ! Let me go, I say, let me go ! It was not I who"

"How now, boy," demanded Hulda, whose step had wakened Arnulf: "what ails thee ? Peace, or we shall have you waking up the tell-tale echoes to call down upon us the cross-worshippers of la Sarraz."

"I thought he had got hold of me, and was dipping me in the waters of the lake : oh, it was so cold ! And then a flower grew out of the roof of uncle's cottage, as high as the White Mole-hill,* with red, red bunches of flowers on it, each like a man's face staring at me. Didn't you smell the drugs, and hear the smash of the bottles ? I did !. And then the books : how the letters blazed out like fire ! it quite dazzled my eyes. Oh, Hulda, I wish you had never persuaded us to do it !"

"Nonsense, minion !" replied Hulda: "are you dreaming still, or are you in a fever ? You must be hnngrny : what have you got for supper ?"

* A common name among the country folk for Mont Blanc.

Arnulf produced from his wallet some roots, and a few fungi, which looked between truffles and toadstools. Hulda added a fish, which had been left in her path by an otter, and lighting a fire on a flat stone, from which they beat off the snow, they roasted their victuals in the wood-ashes, ate in silence, and turned into their stone cabin for the night.

It is popularly supposed that witches, so-called, do not sleep, but are busier than ever in the night. Hulda, however, certainly did so, as also did her young companion, till towards morning, when a loud but confused sound, as of many voices joining in a chorus of natural treble, tenor and bass, made him again start and sit up, wondering what new terror had come to scare him.

Arnulf at once knew that such sounds could come from but one source,—the wolves.

He vainly tried to wake Hulda, the only relief being that she was nearer to the entrance than he was. To his joy, after what seemed an hour's suspense, the sound

died away, and for this time the danger was past.

Day broke, and the strangely-coupled pair sallied forth to prowl for their supply of food, a task constantly repeated through the next three dreary months, during which time poor Arnulf grew more thin and pinched than ever. An old man's expression settled on his face, and his hair hung in matted locks about his shoulders, while the second half of the hermit's frieze-cloth rug, which he had stitched together into a kind of sleeveless coat with a thorn and some coarse grass, was almost falling to pieces.

The two kept together from no affection, but from unwillingness to be alone, and the boy from fear of Hulda, who was glad to make use of him. There was, moreover, some excitement in the life, and under her teaching he became a skilled archer and trapper. Still with the cold, uncertain food and constant fear of wolves, boars and human enemies, it was a wretched existence, and Arnulf longed to be free from it. Nor were

their prospects improved, when a narrow escape of discovery from some wood-cutters obliged them to beat a retreat, and to pierce farther north into the forest, where for the present we must be content to leave them.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROMAIN CANONISED.

“Oh, hated shades and darkness ! when
You have got here the sway again,
And like unwholesome fogs withstood
The light, and blasted all that's good,
Who shall the happy shepherds be,
To watch the next nativity
Of truth and brightness, and make way
For the returning rising day ?”

HENRY VAUGHAN, about 1650.

NEVER had winter passed more quickly to the little maiden of Désidères than this one. Her earnest wish had been fulfilled. Her mother had prepared a little room on purpose for the hermit, and, though he had made every possible objection to a move, and it was, he said, like dying to tear himself away from his beloved grotto, he had yielded at

length to the entreaties of all his friends, and was now an inmate of the humble house, where he had so often been an honoured guest.

The copying went on busily, and Paca became so handy in writing from Lupicine's dictation, that the new version, as he playfully called it, bade fair to surpass the old.

An unexpected boon, moreover, came from the Seigneur, who had heard of the hermit's literary tastes, and also of the ill-treatment he had undergone. He got for him from Milan a copy of Jerome's Kings and Prophets, by far the best portion of his work, and much more valuable than would have been the same books in the Vulgate or Latin *Version* amended and arranged by that father, before he made his own translation of the Bible in his celebrated cave at Bethlehem.*

* In Jerome's own day the name of "Vulgate" was given to the Old Greek and Latin Versions, very imperfect, then current. He taught himself Hebrew, and made a new Translation of the Bible, though this Translation, now generally called *The Vulgate*, contains much

During the long intervals, when no work was to be done, Jacques and Julien would come and watch, or bring their wicker-baskets to finish, and often of an evening they would get Lupicine to tell them of the events of his early life in Italy, and of the men whom he had known in Rome.

Spring made a show of coming in early, and the old hermit, who longed for a return to his more hardy and active life of open air exertion, prepared himself, by some shorter walks among the scattered dwellers of the neighbourhood, to undertake a longer expedition. He now reaped the benefit of the rest and kind care he had enjoyed during the winter. His Sundays had been fully occupied without being accompanied by much bodily fatigue, and the readings, prayers and catechisings which had been the order of the day in the little hamlets round, had all been arranged so as to spare him unnecessary expenditure of strength.

of the old and incorrect matter, both in the Old and New Testaments.

It was a disappointment to Paca that her friend and pastor preferred to go to his cave for the first time alone. She wished herself to see how it looked, and she did not like his roaming about by himself. She would not, however, press the point, and bade him God speed as he set off one unusually warm morning in March, to visit his home of by-gone days, and the cell of his beloved Romain. His good hostess had packed him up a little basket of provisions, enough to last him two days, if he should stay the night. He promised, however, to return the second evening, should all be well, Jacques foretelling a return of cold weather, which would make it prudent for him to put off his summer sojourn at the grotto till a few weeks later.

It can be imagined with what feelings of mingled sadness and joy the hermit again stood at his close-barred door. Often had he halted on his way up the rocky path, and recalled the past, and fallen into a reverie, from which he had reproachfully aroused

himself, as he saw how the sun was nearing noon. But he could not enter without falling on his knees, and once more imploring the presence of Him, who had promised to "go with him and give him rest."

We will not press upon the hallowed solitude which befits the entrance of the Man of God into the chamber where so many of his happiest hours had been spent. Enough to say that in the course of the afternoon he might have been seen wending his way with quickened steps beside one of the tributaries of the Orbe towards the spot where his brother had lived and died, and before sunset reached the goal of his expectations.

Great was Lupicine's surprise at the changes which had taken place. It had so happened that during the whole of the previous summer and autumn he had been prevented from visiting the spot. He had heard indeed of building having begun, and rumour had spoken of a convent as likely to be reared in the valley where the hermitage had been. But Lupicine had never supposed that the

hermitage of his brother was actually to be the site of the new structure, and his mind misgave him as he saw the massive foundations, and thought of the vanities and errors of the false Christianity, which might alas ! there find its home.

A temporary house of wood had been reared before winter set in, and some six monks were already established here, one of them acting as porter. On knocking at the gate the hermit was readily admitted, and asked to refresh himself with the brothers, who were truly hospitable, and anxious to relieve the stranger, and to cure him of any ailment he might suffer from, if that were the object of his visit.

Lupicine did not tell his name or his errand. He thankfully partook of the fare placed before him, conversed, and listened to the conversation of his hosts.

The monks were full of the struggle, then at its height, between Felix II, Bishop of Rome, and Acacius, Metropolitan of Constantinople, each contending for the spiritual

supremacy. It was a just judgment, they said, which had fallen on the Eastern Emperor, Zeno, for upholding the patriarch against the successor of the holy Peter.

Lupicine inquired what had happened to the Emperor ?

"Oh," said the brother, who had admitted him ; "have you not heard the news ? Zeno fell into a swoon, and was buried alive by his Queen Ariadne. It is said that he was heard struggling, while the service was being chanted over him ; but it was known that the Empress wanted to get rid of him, and no one dared to interfere till the ceremony was over, and then, when the body was examined, he was found to be really dead. I hope great things," he added, "from the Silenciary Anastasius.* He is certain to be-

* A domestic of high position in the court. His office was to maintain peace and silence within the precincts of the palace. Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, chap. xxxix.), speaks more favourably of Ariadne and says that Anastasius lived twenty-seven years after his marriage with the widow of Zeno, and his elevation to the throne. It is said that the people so esteemed him for his long and honourable

come Emperor, and, if I mistake not, we shall see him the second husband of Ariadne, before a twelvemonth is out."

Lupicine was shocked, and asked if he might be allowed to see the cell of a good hermit, who was once known in these parts.

"Brother Aquila," said the superior, addressing the brother who had acted as porter, "show our aged guest the sacred chapel. Be careful of the holy relics, but let the stranger kiss the bones, if such be his reverend desire."

The hermit sighed and trembled, as brother Aquila lighted his hand-lamp,—for it was now evening,—and led him toward a spot, every foot of which was familiar to him, and full of sacred associations.

All was indeed altered. The beauty and simplicity of the natural cell was gone for ever, and in its stead carved stone-work, gilded panels and Byzantine mosaics adorned, and to the hermit's eye, disfigured the scene.

public career, that they saluted him as Emperor with shouts of—"Reign as you have lived!"

His feelings overcame him, and he fell prostrate with grief too deep for tears.

The monk, rejoiced at the old man's devotion, unlocked the iron-bound chest, and, taking out a box wrapped up in silk, displayed part of a skull, and some finger-bones, which he placed before Lupicine, inviting him to kiss the venerated remains, and carry away the blessing he desired.

This was too much for the affectionate but indignant spirit of the hermit. He started to his feet, and fixing his eyes on those of the monk exclaimed :—

“Sacrilegious robber, or deceiver,—which of the two art thou? Hast thou dared to disturb the bones of the blessed Romain, or are these some of the lying wonders in which ye are come from Rome to traffic?” Then without waiting for an answer from Aquila, he continued :—

“May God forgive an old man's anger; but if this be your blind intent, to come into our mountain valleys and teach our people to worship your relics and your crucifixes, to

pray to the Blessed Virgin and to saints and angels, and to dread the pangs of your pagan-borrowed purgatory, may Romain return from paradise and drive ye back across the Alps! This he never taught, and it is blasphemy to fasten it on his sainted name!"

Brother Aquila, pale, and scared by this unlooked-for outburst, made toward the door of the chapel, doubting whether to consider his visitor a heretic or a madman. Lupicine kept pace with him, as with flickering lamp he made for the dwelling-house. As they passed the entrance-gate, the hermit motioned to the monk to unbar it. Aquila was by no means loth to comply, and readily showed the stranger out into the darkness. Lupicine bade him thank the superior for his entertainment, and say that he would lodge elsewhere that night.

The monks were troubled at brother Aquila's account. It did not seem to promise well for their undertaking. One or two of the younger ones declared their belief that the visitor had been none other than the de-

ceased Romain himself. Nor was it till some time afterwards that through the country people they discovered whom they had received under their roof.

We left Lupicine at the gate of the newly-founded monastery. In his agitation he turned up the valley instead of down, praying, as he walked on by the light of the rising moon, for the mistaken teachers who had come among them, for the scattered sheep of Christ's flock, and for himself, that he might be "kept from falling," and might yet "finish his course with joy."

It was a happy thing for the old hermit that he fell in with a lime-burner, who was just going into his hut for a short night's rest, while his companion watched the fires. Lupicine shared with him the contents of his basket, and found his new host willing to join him for a few moments in prayer. Both then lay down, and before dawn were up again, had partaken of their frugal breakfast and separated for their respective destinations.

CHAPTER IX.

AN UNEXPECTED RENCONTRE,

“ Oh wail not in the darksome forest,
Where thou must needs be left alone,
But, e'en when memory is sorest,
Seek out a path, and journey on.

“ Thou wilt have angels near above,
By whom invisible aid is given ;
They journey still on tasks of love,
And never rest except in Heaven.”

STERLING.

THE night had been very cold. The wind blew strong and keen, as Lupicine started on his return to his friends at Désidères. He was in no mood to pass again the scene which had so distressed him the evening before, as he must have done had he followed the road down the valley, by Romain-motier and la Sarraz. There was, however, the lime-

burner assured him, a track through the forest, over the shoulder of Mont Tendre, crossing the Roman road from Geneva to Orbe. The hermit made his way bravely on for the first two or three hours, in spite of the badness of the track, which was in a dreadful state, owing to the thaw. Then came a stream to be waded through, after which the path branched right and left, with nothing to direct Lupicine which of the two to choose.

After some delay, praying for guidance, and repeating the 23rd psalm in Latin, the old man struck off to the right. The snow, which had long threatened, began to fall, and still further baffled our traveller in his endeavours to gain some land-mark from which he could calculate his nearness to the goal of his journey.

At length the path stopped short at the ruins of an old Roman watch-tower, and to his dismay Lupicine discovered that instead of approaching the open plain in which the villages were situated, he had been walking

in a westerly direction, and was now not far from the shores of lac de Joux.

Had not the hermit's strength been recruited by the winter at Désidères he could never have borne the fatigues of that day. As it was, he was nearly exhausted, and but for the wine and bread that still remained in his basket, he must have sunk in that treacherous slumber, which knows no earthly awakening.

The snow at this time ceased, and, refreshed by a portion of his slender stock of provisions, the hermit sat upon the stem of a fallen tree to reconnoitre. He could not doubt that a loving hand was over him. He firmly believed that, even though he might have acted unwisely in coming by the forest track, his ways were still over-ruled by One who for our Mediator's sake would turn his very errors to good in the end. He thought of Paca's anxiety as the night was closing in, and her old friend did not return. He knew that at that moment she would be praying for him, and he started cheerily up, assured

that ere long he would be led out of his difficulties.

Prayer was indeed going up from the altar of that simple but believing heart, and when her thoughts of her beloved teacher grew too troubled and fearful, she passed on, as she had never forgotten to do, to supplicate for the two boys and Hulda. Her pity was specially stirred on behalf of Arnulf, partly for his own sake, as an orphan, and partly because she had hoped he at least would have escaped from the bad influences of Hulda and his heathen relations.

Paca little knew the importance of her particular intercessions at that individual moment.

At the time when Lucipine rose from the ash-trunk to pursue his solitary way, another and a younger wanderer was threading the mazes of the forest. His hollow cheeks and wild, starting eyeballs told of keen hunger, fear and cold, which had indeed been all doing their work during the past wearisome weeks.

It need not be said that it was Arnulf, who had at last escaped from the keen eye of Hulda, and for many days had been making his way southward through the thick and pathless forest. He had walked by the sun during the day, and climbed into a bush or tree for the night, feeding upon roots, mast, lichen and bird's eggs, of which he had found a few early specimens,—and now and then devouring raw a bird he caught roosting on its perch, or a squirrel, later than his lively companions, found asleep in its nest. He had made up his mind to go to the hermit, confess his faults, and let him do with him as he might think best.

By this time Arnulf was almost famished, but he fancied he was near the Druid's altar near the lac de Joux, and he remembered that they had left a good store of roots and beech-mast in a hole hard by, when he and Hulda had been obliged to quit their hiding-place.

And so it came to pass that at the very time when, sadly and tearfully, Paca was

praying in her room,—some of her tears falling on the geranium, now her own, and already giving promise of fresh spring buds on its stem,—the trustful old man and the half-civilized boy were gradually drawing nearer together, till at last, at the head of the mountain lake, they stood face to face!

They met, they looked, they spoke; they felt for each other as for themselves; in short, they became friends without knowing it, and were at once brothers at heart!

Arnulf was overjoyed to find that he could be of some service to the good man he had once treated so unkindly. In the clear moonlight he had no difficulty in guiding Lucipine to the cave-like altar among the trees, nor in finding his hoard of winter food in the spot he had so long borne in mind. There were plenty of dried leaves underneath the great altar stone, and the two quickly collected a supply of turfs and branches, Lupicine laying hands on some good strong stakes, which had been left, it would seem, by some wood-cut-

ters, after they had carried off the tree they had felled.

"We had best light a fire outside, my lad," said Lucipine, "not only to roast your roots, but also to keep off the wolves. They are beginning their music already, I hear, and who knows but they may find us out?"

Arnulf turned pale, and told the hermit of the frights and escapes he had had during the winter, while with Lupicine's knife and Arnulf's flint they at length "caught a fire" and prepared for their night's bivouac.

Over this simple meal the hermit spoke gently to the boy of his past ignorance and misconduct, and ere they slept Arnulf's heart seemed softened at the story of the Good Shepherd and His sufferings, and he asked his kind friend to pray that he might have a new heart.

And so they slept far on into the night, taking turns to watch and keep up the fire. It was Arnulf's watch. He was thinking once more of all the past, and the fire had burned down at the mouth of their low cave, while

the moon had got far round toward the west, and a show of dusky light began to stir in the east. Arnulf was rapidly floating into a happier dream than one he had had amid those cold grey stones before, when he woke with a start, and instantly roused his companion.

It was indeed as Lupicine had thought. The wolves were on some track, and their baying sounded almost close at hand, as the morning breeze swept down toward the lake, and the echoes on all sides took up the strain.

"Make up the fire quick, boy!" said Lupicine, taking his knife from his girdle as he spoke, and sharpening it on a flat stone. "Remember what you heard last night about the Good Shepherd, and ask Him yourself to save us."

Arnulf was full of excitement, but showed no signs of fear. He made up the fire, and brought a good store of wood into their retreat. Then the hermit heard him in a low tone outside praying to the Good Shepherd

to keep him and his forgiving friend from the dangers that surrounded them, and to bring them back to their home in safety. It rejoiced the old man's heart to hear this hitherto rebellious tongue humbly addressing itself to the Redeemer, who specially invites the young to His arms. He mingled a thanksgiving with his petitions, and then bade Arnulf join him within.

The poor orphan felt happier than he had done for years as he took his place beside the man of God, whom he was determined to defend to the last drop of his blood. His eye danced with a kind of glee, as a gust of wind again brought the howling of the hungry pack to their ears, and he thought of the fight they might presently have to wage. Lupicine calmly awaited the issue, ready, if need be, in this unlooked for way to go and meet his Lord, but trusting that for others', if not for his own sake, his life would yet awhile be prolonged.

It seemed an age since the first alarm was given, but no wolves had appeared as yet.

Was it a false alarm after all ? Had they gone in pursuit of other game, or were they only silent because they were sure of their prey, and were now without warning about to rush out on them from the thicket ?

Several times Arnulf peeped out through the smoke, without seeing anything remarkable. Now the hermit allowed him to go out and make a survey, while he himself relieved his back by crawling out from beneath the altar-stone, and rising to his full height. All of a sudden, as Lupicine was in the act of stirring up the embers with a stake, he was startled by a loud cry, like the shriek of a female in terror, far up in the forest. Arnulf heard it too : he stood aghast : his teeth chattered as he gasped forth,—

“Do you know that voice ? it was Hulda’s !” Lupicine waited not to reply ; with the stake, lighted at the end, in his hand he dashed forward in the direction of the voice with the speed of a young man of thirty.

Close behind him came Arnulf, who also seized a lighted brand, and waved it into a

flame as he ran. The supple limbs and hardly-trained muscles soon told in favour of the younger huntsman, and the boy now led the way, through brake and briar, the old man falling rapidly behind, while ever and anon, above the sharp yelping of the hungry pack, rose nearer and clearer the shriek of that defenceless woman.

"Merciful God," prayed Lupicine, in thought, if not in words; "give me strength for this one hour! Let not the sorceress perish in her sins! Let me not be a hireling, to flee when the wolf assails. As my very name tells of that ravenous beast, grant that it may gain a new meaning by a triumph over him! The child too,—oh, spare his life, or make him indeed Thine own!"

Hulda had vainly looked in her headlong flight for a friendly tree into which she might climb. Already she must have been torn to pieces, had she not twice over brought down one of the foremost of the pack with her poisoned darts, which she now carried instead of her accustomed wand. In the

blind hatred, with which she had been searching for the truant Arnulf, she might have hurled one with fatal aim against him. But a common foe made three, who had once been divided, one that day in heart and will and arm.

"Up this tree!" cried Arnulf, as Hulda almost ran against him, with the white teeth of the wolves, dropping their comrade's blood, gnashing and grinding within twenty paces of her. And waving his flambeau in the eyes of the nearest, he kept him a moment at bay, while the fainting woman scrambled, she knew not how, into the arms of a friendly pine. Once there she again drew breath, and, providentially for her young defender, she was enabled with her third and last dart to strike down a ferocious monster, who was about to spring at the boy over the backs of his half-cowed mates. They instantly set upon him and tore him limb from limb, while in his only safe moment Arnulf flung himself into the tree and was also out of reach of his assailants.

It was well for the hermit that his weaker steps had kept him back in the race. Had he come up first with the wolves, he must have fallen a victim to their fury. As it was, he no sooner approached the tree which sheltered Hulda and Arnulf than he knew by the wild leaps and antics of the wolves, and their mad howls of disappointment, that the pair, or either who might have survived, were beyond immediate danger. He could hear their voices too in a lull of the babel of howlings,—oh, joy, that two voices were distinctly audible,—bidding him keep away, and get help from elsewhere, if he would save his life and their own.

The wolves were happily so intent upon the prey, caught in a trap almost within their reach, that they did not discover the helpless old man, who would have afforded them so relishing a repast.

Feeling he could do nothing without help, Lupicine commended the imprisoned pair in his heart to God, and hurried away for succour.

CHAPTER X.

ROYAL VISITORS.

“O blest is he, to whom is given
The instinct, that can tell
That God is on the field, when He
Is most invisible.”

Hymns of the Church Militant.

A gay, bright morning was that 16th March A.D. 491. All was astir at the castle of the Seigneur, which was situated on the bank of the Upper Veyron about three leagues from la Sarraz. It was a day of no small importance. Chilperic, brother of King Gondebald, had come to the castle the day before from Geneva, with his daughter Clotilda and her suite, to enjoy two or three days boar-hunting in the forest of Joux. Long before dawn the attendants had been up and about sharp-

ening spears and preparing cars, while the hounds, who had fasted the whole day before, were baying half-fiercely, half-reproachfully at their keepers.

At sunrise the whole party started, the Seigneur and his son, a boy of fourteen, in the first car, with Chilperic and his aide-de-camp, (if we may use the term so long before its date), the Seigneur's daughter Fregonde seated in the next, side by side with Clotilda, the flower of the Burgundian court, and many lords and ladies, chiefs and warriors making up the train.

Julien, as knowing the forest well, had been summoned to attend, and the route had been all arranged between him and the chief huntsman the night before.

At the foot of Mount Tendre, where now stands la Coudre, a halt was made. Those who were going into the forest itself, on horse-back or on foot, quitted the road, leaving the ladies and their attendants to watch the sport, when game should be found and driven towards them.

Strangely enough the princess and her friend, during the interval, lasting till noon, before anything special occurred, spoke, after exhausting other subjects, of the differences of religion, which divided not only Christendom from heathenism, but one from another part of Christ's own Church.

Most of the Burgundians were imbued with the errors of Arius,* though a great deal of the teaching of their bishops was called Arian by their opponents, which was really nothing of the kind. The Seigneur's special friend, the Bishop of Avenches, was decidedly free from Arianism.

Clotilda, on the other hand, though constantly at the court of her uncle, had been brought up a Catholic. What this word meant then is almost as difficult to say as what it means now. Much was taught under the time-honoured name, which never was

* Condemned by the First Council of Nice, A.D. 325. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, taught that our blessed Lord was not of *one essence* with the Father, but only the first and highest of *created* beings.

Universal, or believed and taught through the whole of Christendom. Yet the Catholics of that day had not gone so far from the simple doctrines of really primitive and Apostolic Christianity as they did shortly after.

And happily the fair princess and her dark-eyed companion, who at one time had shrunk from each other with reserve; not to say suspicion, found that in heart and real faith they were but little apart, and that little they resolved should not spoil their friendship.

Clotilda was somewhat sadly telling Fregonde of her approaching betrothal to Clovis, the young King of the Franks, when a movement took place among the guards who lined the outskirts of the forest. Shouts and bugles and baying of hounds had been heard now in one direction and now in another, and all were on the tip-toe of expectation, to see where the boar would break cover.

"Clear aside!" cried the scouts, and the guards formed a wide lane, the mixed throng falling back in alarm and confusion.

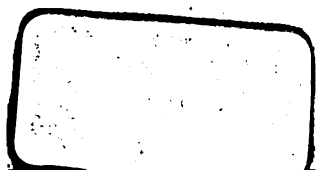
A cheer rose, followed by a derisive laugh,

which swept
 crowd, as
 boar, there
 the half-boar
 old man
 stumbled
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which swept like a wave back among the crowd, as, instead of the foaming, bristly boar, there emerged from the tall underwood the half-bent, tottering form of a grey-haired old man! Fainting and breathless, he stumbled over a chestnut-root and fell. When raised by the guards, he could utter but one word, "*The Wolves!*" and swooned away.

"It is the hermit!" exclaimed Fregonde, as she caught sight of his grey hair and lifeless form: "oh, bring him here!" and turning to the princess, she shortly explained who the old man was, and asked if he might be laid in the carriage.

The princess had often heard her father speak of the hermit, and his visit to Geneva, and was full of interest and feeling. She urged the attendants to give him some wine, which soon restored the exhausted old man, and enabled him to tell his tale.

Messengers were at once despatched to the Seigneur, who with his party had killed two boars in the forest already, having failed to drive them out into the open.

"How say your, Sire," said the Seigneur to Prince Chilperic? Are you inclined to exchange the boar-chase for a wolf-hunt? My daughter tells me that these voracious miscreants have chased a boy and a woman up into a tree, and are now waiting, like the fox in the fable, for the cheese to drop into their mouths."

Chilperic was delighted at the prospect of saving as well as destroying life at one stroke, and under the guidance of Julien the calvacade moved forward as quickly as the state of the road would allow. Julien was half-disposed to wish that the wretched Hulda and the truant Arnulf had been quickly put out of the way by the wolves, instead of coming again upon the scene; but better thoughts prevailed, and he threw his heart into the adventure.

It was far on into the afternoon before the party had rounded the head of the lac de Joux, and ascended the hill on the other side.

"We should be within hearing of them,

Jnlien," said the Seigneur: "they haven't given us the slip, have they?"

"Never fear," my lord, replied the young man: "they are hungry, depend on it. The boy too will keep them alive and on the look out, I fancy. They are resting, I dare say. A pity we can't make a ring round the tree and hem them all in, once for all."

At this moment the Seigneur's son ran up to his father,—the horses had been left by the lake,—and with a troubled face said to him: "Father, the men say the old woman is a witch, and declare that they will either throw her to the wolves, or burn her alive! Do save her! she won't do *us* any harm, will she?"

"Harm? no, my boy, as long as we trust God, do our duty, and keep our swords sharp. But I must look after those fellows: they will be up to mischief, if I don't take care."

Bidding his son play the host to the royal guest, the Seigneur strode off to the band of

retainers and huntsmen, who were talking in loud tones about the sorceress, and what she deserved for her practices. The question was satisfactorily decided by the Seigneur's proposing that Hulda should be handed over to Chilperic, as brother to the king. He knew the law was rigorous, condemning all such supposed tamperers with Satan to the stake, and he felt pretty sure that the king would carry it into execution, should the matter come to his ears. Chilperic, however, was known to be mercifully inclined, as indeed he had shown himself when holding for a time the dependent principality of Geneva under his suspicious brother-Gondebald.

Meantime a sudden and hideous yelling was heard some little distance to the right of the hunting party, who were scattering about in search of the all-important tree, with no very particular clue to guide them to its whereabouts. There was no longer any doubt on this point, and now hounds and men were off at full speed under the long branches of the pines, which never recover the weight of

snow that in winter makes them droop toward the ground.

By Julien's arrangement the hunters formed a half-moon, but there was little hope of keeping to any settled plan. On they dashed, the howling every moment becoming clearer, and, to their surprise and partial disappointment, shouts and the barking of dogs also mingling with the din. Hemmed in on two sides, and partly outflanked, the lean and famished prowlers of the forest boldly turned to bay, and with the exception of a few who fled at the first onset, were torn to pieces by the hounds, or cut down with axes of the unknown party of allies, or speared by the Seigneur and his followers.

Julien was the first to recognise Jacques among the little band whose arrival had been so timely, and it was soon explained that after Julien's departure, the village had been roused to go in search of their beloved teacher, with the warm-hearted Jacques at their head.

Thankful enough were the two refugees to

be delivered from their uncomfortable position. Fear and hunger and cold had brought down the spirit of Hulda, which was not even aroused by the hisses and shouts of those who looked on her as a foe of God and man alike. By the request of the Seigneur, privately made, Chilperic laid his hand on her with the words: "Woman, in the king's name I arrest thee!" He then gave orders through his aide-de-camp that she should, after having refreshment given her, be removed to the castle, till her case was inquired into.

Arnulf was the hero of the hour, when he told of his having met the hermit the evening before, of their united efforts to rescue Hulda and of the way in which he had kept the wolves from leaving the tree by dancing on the branches and singing to them.

The villagers were much disappointed not to find Lupicine also immediately; but on hearing that he was in good hands they were satisfied, and prepared to return.

It was now nightfall, and, lighting torches,

the whole company marched forward along the track which led by the Roman tower towards the villages of the plain, singing in chorus as they went, and giving from time to time cheers for Lupicine, Arnulf, the Seigneur and, last not least, the just and generous Prince Chilperic.

By midnight, accommodation had been found for man and beast, albeit in homely quarters.

Jacques and his little band, ere they parted, doffed their hats and bent their knees, while he shortly thanked God for their successful expedition, and bade them join him in a hymn of praise to the Almighty.

CHAPTER XI.

IMPORTANT CHANGES.

“ Though smiles and tears, and sun and storm
Still change life's ever-varying form,
The mind, that looks on things aright,
Sees through the cloud the deep blue light.”

ANON.

WE left the hermit in the kind and condescending hands of the Princess Clotilda and her friend, the daughter of the Seigneur. Lupicine would have made his way to the abode of his humbler friends at Désidères on foot, if he had been allowed to do so, but the ladies would not hear of this. Two of the ladies of the court who had accompanied the princess from Geneva settled the question by deciding that, as they were now much nearer to la Sarraz than the castle, they should drive

on, taking the hermit with them, and pass the night there, or at Désidères. The bulk of the guards were sent back, with a message for the Seigneur's lady, and messengers despatched in advance to prepare for the arrival of such honourable guests.

The bailiff's good dame was in a fine bustle that evening, getting rooms and supper for her young mistress and her grand visitors, and Paca's mother was sent for to help. Jacques and Julien were both absent, but the worthy old crone, who kept house for them, now that their mother was dead, knew that she might send up to the comp-house, as the bailiff's would be called in later times, as much as was wanted of eggs, butter, cream, cheese and kid's flesh, and that she was withal sure of fair payment for all the articles consumed.

Clotilda and Fregonde thoroughly enjoyed this peep at country life, and even their chaperons, though somewhat fastidious at first, were delighted at the cleanliness of the place and the pretty way in which the viands were

served, so that all were soon thoroughly at home.

Rooms were got ready at the house of a wealthy farmer for Chilperic and the Seigneur, and the remainder of the suite, on their arrival by star and torch-light, were disposed of with plain but cheerful hospitality. The events of the day were discussed by many a hearth far on into the night, and not a few dwelt with wonder and thankfulness on the merciful providence of God, who had by such singular and yet simple means preserved three lives from death.

But no fireside was so quietly happy that night as the one where sat the weary but blythe-hearted old hermit, and his child-friend Paca, waiting for the mother's return. Tears filled her eyes as he told of the several steps of his unwonted pilgrimage, every detail of which she eagerly devoured. Nothing was too small to call forth her interest, sympathy, regret or gratitude, as the case might be. She recalled exactly what she had been doing when Lupicine was visiting his tenantless grotto, .

and the painfully altered cell of Romain; how earnestly she had been praying for him that night when he fell in with the kind-hearted lime-burner, and still more so at the hour when on the next evening he had lost his way in the forest. Little had she slept, thinking what might have become of her beloved teacher, and following Jacques in spirit, as he sallied forth with his trusty comrades for the search.

She seemed to have lived a life-time in those last twenty-four hours, and a natural seriousness came over the young maiden, which affected Lupicine also.

After some minutes' silence, the old man turned from the embers, on which his eyes had been fixed, and surprised Paca by the question, growing out of his ponderings on the future:—"And what would my little friend say if, when I have followed Romain, they should build a convent here, and ask her to join? Would she enter it?"

Though surprised at the inquiry, the thought was not new. So without hesitation

Paca replied : "Nay, father, I think such a life is too shut in, do not you?"

"Ah, my 'child, to one used like you to the fresh air of heaven and the charm of moss and mountain, I can well believe that the confinement within cold stone walls would prove sad and injurious."

"Oh, I did not mean that, father: I think I could bear that, if—if—I was sure Jesus called me to be there. But I think the thoughts and feelings get shut in,—I know no better word,—and I don't think that could be good for any one."

"Then what would my little scholar choose for her lot in life, if a good fée gave her a wish, eh?"

Paca looked up and saw a twinkle about the old man's mouth, which just a little teased her—only a very little, though. She looked a moment at the charred pine-log, and then said artlessly: "I should like to help mother, and perhaps teach a few children, if they would come to me."

What more the hermit might have said,

and why he put such questions, must be left among the things that will never be known. A step was heard outside, and in came Paca's mother, leading by the hand the boy Arnulf, who had so earnestly begged to be taken to the good hermit, that Prince Chilperic, to whom the matter was referred, at once decided that it should be so. He hung down his head in silence, assured them he was not hungry and was glad when he was put in Paca's charge for bed.

While the two younger ones were upstairs the worthy dame informed Lupicine in a low tone that one of the ladies in the company of the princess and her friend had asked her if she knew of a well-conducted, reliable young damsel to wait upon a young lady. The Seigneur's lady wanted an attendant for her daughter, and it was particularly important to choose a fitting one, as it was most likely that the young lady would go to be companion to the princess, between her betrothal and her marriage, and the maid would go

with her. The bailiff's wife had at once named Paca, and the anxious but truly Christian mother earnestly besought the man of God to pray that she and her daughter might be guided to a right decision. Nothing more was said that night. When Arnulf was stowed away, the three joined in the fervent supplication that flowed from the lips of the hermit, and were all soon asleep.

Jacques forbore to come in that night, only sending his thankful greetings by the hostess to her happily restored guest.

Before Paca could hear from her mother next morning about the important change that might come to pass in her circumstances, a messenger arrived to ask the mother to return to the comp-house. She therefore begged Lupicine to break it to her child, adding that she had no objection beyond the regret of parting with her, and anxiety as to her going among strangers.

The hermit disguised his own feelings, and reminding the maiden of their fire-light talk,

which had closed the evening before rather hurriedly, asked her if she were willing to take a new work in hand ?

The struggle was very great in the young girl's mind between affection and a sense of duty. Tears, and prayer with her faithful adviser, led at last to a consent, if she were found suitable. Then came a second message to ask the hermit across to speak with the ladies, and a fresh leaf was perhaps about to be turned over by more than one of the little winter group.

Paca accompanied Lupicine, and of course Arnulf, who dreaded being sent back to his uncle, could not be left behind. The trio found all arranged on their arrival, *if the "ifs"* turned out favourably. First Paca was to show the princess and Fregonde the way to the hermit's grotto, which they were most anxious to see. Then, on her coming to an agreement as to the situation, which was settled on the "yes" side there and then, her mother was to put together a few little necessities that she might drive down with

her new young mistress that afternoon to the castle. And thirdly the hermit, who was not any more prepared than his young friend for so sudden a parting, was called upon to meet a second blow with scarce a moment's breathing-time between.

As Paca was to leave home, her mother, who was not strong, would need some help. But a very desirable post as housekeeper was open to her, very near the Seigneur's castle, and supposing an arrangement could be made, was Lupicine willing to leave the cottage where they had hoped he would have made a home for life?

The hermit spoke of his wish to return to his cave, but this was not to be heard of, especially as the excitement and fatigue of the last two or three days had evidently told on him. He would fain have said with Simeon : "Lord, now let me depart in peace," but his words were choked by emotion, and he could only say :—"As ye will, my ladies, and as my Lord wills. It little matters where I make the last halt of my pilgrimage. Only

let no thought of me hinder the good Martha from accepting so providential an offer."

The upshot was that Jacques and Julien, on hearing how matters stood, at once claimed the hermit as their most welcome friend and guest, and the only difficulty being thus removed, Paca's mother agreed to take the situation so unexpectedly offered to her.

The only other person to be disposed of was Arnulf, for whom Fregonde promised to find work, in some capacity or other, if he were sent down to the castle, a plan approved by all, and, with the other movements above mentioned, duly carried into effect.

CHAPTER XII.

BRIDALS, ROYAL, SIMPLE AND SPIRITUAL.

“ The prince’s fair daughter there doth ride,
All blushing, close to her mother’s side ;
All blushing, as seemeth a morrow’s bride :—
For the morrow brings her wedding-tide—
A queendom, wealth, and power.

“ And the village lass murmurs not nor sighs
That her poor little self has no crown for a prize—
That four white walls her realm must bound,
(Oh, beautiful life, so quiet encrowned !)
With a man’s true love, and with duties around,
Her life-long portion and dower.”
Slightly altered from the Idyl of Childeasinde.

“ The Sabbath of eternity,
One Sabbath, deep and wide :—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom and His Bride.”

TENNYSON.

SHORT space remains to follow the fortunes
of the actors in this scene of by-gone life.

It seemed a *boule-versement* indeed, when the cottage, where of late so many happy days had passed, became the abode of strangers, and the old man removed to the shelter of the roof, where poor Ursula had breathed her last.

But Lupicine found new work to do. He had long hoped to see a settled pastor with whom he might leave the oversight of the souls whom he had won over to the faith of Christ. A timely visit from the Bishop of Avenches, who with open heart welcomed the somewhat irregular spiritual work accomplished by the hermit, brought things to a point.

The Bishop inquired if there were no one used to the people and their ways, whom he might, after preparation, ordain to this charge?

There was one who had already shown himself faithful in watching over the lambs and kids of his mountain-fed flock, and whose heart had often sighed for some work more especially to be done for God. This

was the silent, but by no means "melancholy Jacques," who had much more in him than was commonly supposed, and who had been undergoing a gentle training for the duties of a higher calling, like Moses in the glens of Horeb.

From Julien the hermit learnt, to his surprise and joy, that his brother would gladly receive from him such lessons as would enable him to minister to the Christians of the district, if he were thought worthy, and if no one else came forward.

All was soon arranged; and painfully at first, but steadily always, and rapidly after awhile, the new pupil followed his beloved master in the track of scriptural instruction.

Julien was equal to the increase of work thus thrown upon him, and as the months flew by he grew into a model of strength and manly activity. It was quite as well for him that his mind and body were thus well occupied, as otherwise it is to be feared he would have *moped* !

Yes, actually moped ! For there was one

little fact, scarcely known to Julien himself, and guessed by perhaps only one person besides, which weighed with him, or at any rate upon him, not a little.

This fact was, that Paca's goodness and gentleness had so told upon Julien's impetuous temper and naturally churlish disposition that when she was gone he found himself at a loss. Though so young, and short and child-like for her age, she was quite a little woman in character, and her graver thoughts had been fostered by the constant companionship of her friend the hermit. And little Paca had stolen Julien's heart.

Business for the Seigneur took Julien down more than once to Geneva, and the second time he came back full of Paca, who was there with her mistress, and to whom it had been unfeigned joy to hear all about the friends of her much-loved home. She was not changed a bit in heart and character, but the two years, which had now passed since the eventful day of the adventure with the wolves, had made a great alteration in her

manner and appearance. To Julien she was kind, but nothing more.

Julien underwent a very close questioning from the hermit, who was, it may be confessed, quite prepared to find the old brotherly affection of the young man for his former pupil ripening into a more decided attachment. To Julien it was a great relief to speak out his mind without fear of ridicule or blame; and out of the suspense he now endured, and the sage and godly counsels of his spiritual adviser, grew up a faith and submission to the Almighty, which had been hitherto lacking in his character.

Of Paca it need only be said that she "walked with God," and followed her Saviour's footsteps, amid the bustle and attractions of city and court life, as humbly and conscientiously as she had done in the retirement of her mother's home. She was the treasure of her mistress, and won the respect, we might almost say the love of the princess herself. The evil of the world she did not see: her soul's gaze was fixed on a higher Object.

Arnulf was all the better for Paca's example and instructions. He had his scrapes; but he set himself against his faults, and became so thoughtful, when under a course of teaching for baptism, that he scarcely seemed the same boy. He showed by after conduct that his 'Christening' had indeed been accompanied by a gift of the Spirit of Christ, and the Seigneur was so pleased with his behaviour as page to his son, that he spoke of making him his squire some day.

It is Christmas eve, 493, within three months of three years since the scattering of the little family at Désidères. Lupicine and Jacques are talking over matters of special interest beside their glowing hearth, while carol-singers without make the air resound with hymns of Bethlehem. The old man has been gradually declining. Not even his own acquaintance with the powers of herbs, and drugs and mineral waters has availed to keep off the rheumatic attacks which began with his expedition to Romain's

cell and the exposures in the forest. For months he has not been outside the door; but his heart is young as ever, and he listens with eager attention to all that Jacques, now the ordained pasteur of la Sarraz and its neighbourhood, has to relate.

First Jacques tells of the Sunday before, when he had been solemnly set apart as deacon by the Bishop of Avenches. Lupicine feels no doubt,

“That evermore beside him on his way
The unseen Christ shall move;
That he will lean upon His arm, and say,
‘Dost Thou, dear Lord, approve?’”

Then comes the full and particular account of a marriage on the Tuesday following, also at Avenches, the grand ceremonial which united the Princess Clotilda to the warlike but generous King of the Franks,—that Clovis of history, who, three years later, after the hard-won victory of Tolbiac,* rejoiced the

* Fought by Clovis against the Alemanni, near Cologne. It is said that Clovis, hearing the Bishop of Rheims describe the passion and death of Christ, started up, and seizing

heart of his consort by being baptized with several thousands of his followers.

But this royal pageant has less interest for both speaker and hearer than the simple wedding between peasant-bride and bridegroom, which was celebrated at the same place, and on the afternoon of the same day, the good Bishop sharing the honours with Jacques, the newly-ordained deacon. It need not be said that the principals are Julien and Paca. The Seigneur has enfranchised the little farm occupied by Julien, and on the morrow after Christmas they are to come to their old, yet new home. Paca has found her life-work at last.

One more stray piece of news gladdens the heart of Lupicine, and this is, that Hulda, after long chafing at the imprisonment to which she had been consigned, has become, as far as can be judged, softened and penitent, and is about to have trial of a post of

his spear violently exclaimed, "Had I been there with my valiant Franks, I would have redressed His wrongs."
Russell.

usefulness, as laundress at the castle, under proper supervision, of course.

And now the aged servant of the Lord, and his son in the faith, join in reading their psalms, in thanksgiving and prayer. They embrace, the younger man helps his feeble friend and father to his couch, and then seeks his own.

Christmas morning dawns with bright sun and sparkling icicle and frosted bough o'er-head. The matin-bell chimes from the little 'temple,' which the Seigneur has had built for Jacques to minister in. He enters the chamber of Lupicine to ask his morning blessing. But hush! the hermit kneels!—will he never finish his prayer? Jacques approaches:—*prayer with Lupicine has ended! praise has already begun*:—he has joined the choirs of angels, and sings before the throne:—"Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace: good-will towards men."

THE END.





